

news

significant shorts

Athletes set to cash in on lottery

Olympic hopefuls could be paid tax-free salaries from lottery funds of up to £28,000 a year in a move that may help avoid a repeat of the embarrassing poor show by British athletes in Atlanta. The idea is part of a plan that the Sports Council is reported to be considering for a £50m grant from the National Lottery. Athletes would be meant to ensure the money went to those in most need of financial support. Their annual payments would be awarded on a sliding scale related directly to achievement and potential and based on international and national rankings. Nominations would be made by the governing bodies of each sport. *Clare Garner*

Cornwall hit by earthquake

West Cornwall was yesterday hit by the area's biggest earthquake for 15 years. The British Geological Survey said the tremor was felt in towns and villages from Padstow to Land's End, and measured 3.8 on the Richter scale. Police stations were inundated with calls, but there were no reports of injuries or major damage. Britain experienced its worst quake in 1931. Centred on Dogger Bank in the North Sea, it registered 6.1 on the Richter scale.

TV diet 'fails health test'

Almost all foods advertised on television aimed at children are high in fat, sugar or salt, according to a new study. Consumers International, a federation of 215 consumer organisations in more than 90 countries, found that confectionery, breakfast cereals and fast-food restaurants accounted for more than half of all food advertisements on television. "Most governments and the World Health Organisation are trying to promote the importance of healthy, balanced diets, especially for children," said Lucy Harris, of Consumers International. "This report shows that TV food advertising essentially undermines that message."

Priest hurt in knife attack

Police in north-west Scotland are hunting a knife attacker who slashed the face of a church minister during a Remembrance service in the Highland village of Scourie. The Rev James Macpherson, 41, was leading prayers at the village war memorial just after the two-minute silence when he was slashed across the cheek by a man wielding a long-bladed knife, causing a wound that required 16 stitches.

Mawhinney on offensive

Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative party chairman, sought last night to exploit the resignation of the Labour candidate for the pending by-election in Wirral South. Ian Wingfield resigned last week as candidate for the Merseyside seat left vacant by the death last weekend of Conservative MP Barry Porter. Mr Mawhinney said that, if true, newspaper reports that Mr Wingfield had been violent towards his girlfriend and former wife made a "mockery of New Labour's claim to be the party of family values". *John Rentoul*

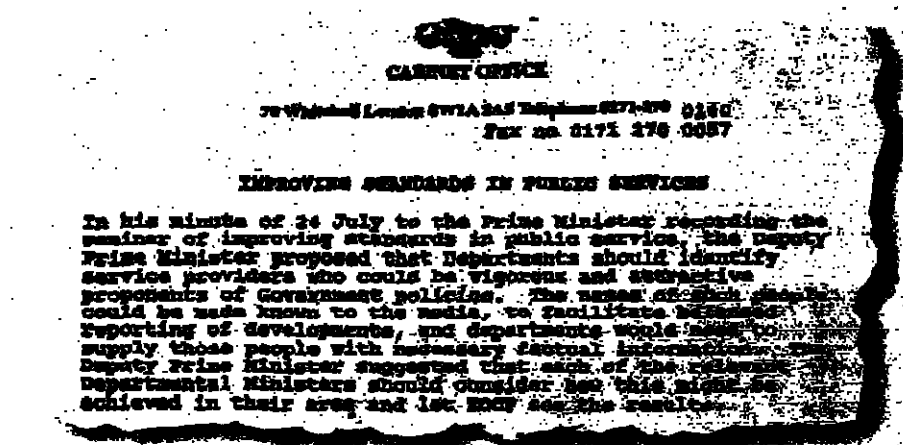
Alarm call for schools

The school day would start earlier under plans drawn up by a key Labour adviser. Professor Michael Barber, who is leading Labour's literacy task force, is proposing an 8am start to the secondary school day. The morning would be given over to formal lessons, leaving an afternoon session - up to around 4pm - devoted to "broader learning". Professor Barber is due to unveil the plan tomorrow at a London conference organised by Community Service Volunteers.

Memo shows Heseltine wanted civil servants to find supporters

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

Civil servants were asked by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, to round up Conservative sympathisers in the public services. A leaked Cabinet Office memo, dated 19 August but leaked yesterday, makes it clear that the initiative was set up by Mr Heseltine in July and approved by the Prime Minister. Responding to press reports that Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, had blocked the use of officials to recruit "cheerleaders" for the Tories, which would have breached civil service rules, Mr Heseltine said: "The moment I was aware, on my return from holiday in September, that a proposal could be open to such a suggestion, I issued instructions that no such practice was acceptable."



A detail from the leaked Cabinet Office memorandum

that departments should identify service providers who could be vigorous proponents of Government policies. Their names could be made known to the media, "to facilitate balanced reporting of developments". The plan to find teachers, doctors and public service workers or leaders was to be overseen by the Cabinet committee, known as EDCP and chaired by Mr Heseltine, responsible for "co-ordinating and presenting" government policy. The memo was a round robin from an official in Mr Heseltine's Cabinet Office to all departments. "To enable EDCP to take an overview, I should be grateful if recipients of this letter could let [name blacked out] have their departments' plans for action to set up

panels of people supporting the Government's policies, by 24 September."

It was circulated to ministers' private secretaries, rather than to their political advisers, apparently in breach of the 1975 civil service code. Civil servants are not allowed to work on party political matters. Giles Radice, the Labour chairman of the cross-party Public Service Committee, who drew up the code, said: "I am pleased to see Sir Robin is defending the conventions enshrined in the code, but it is disturbing to see that government ministers seem to be trying to flout it."

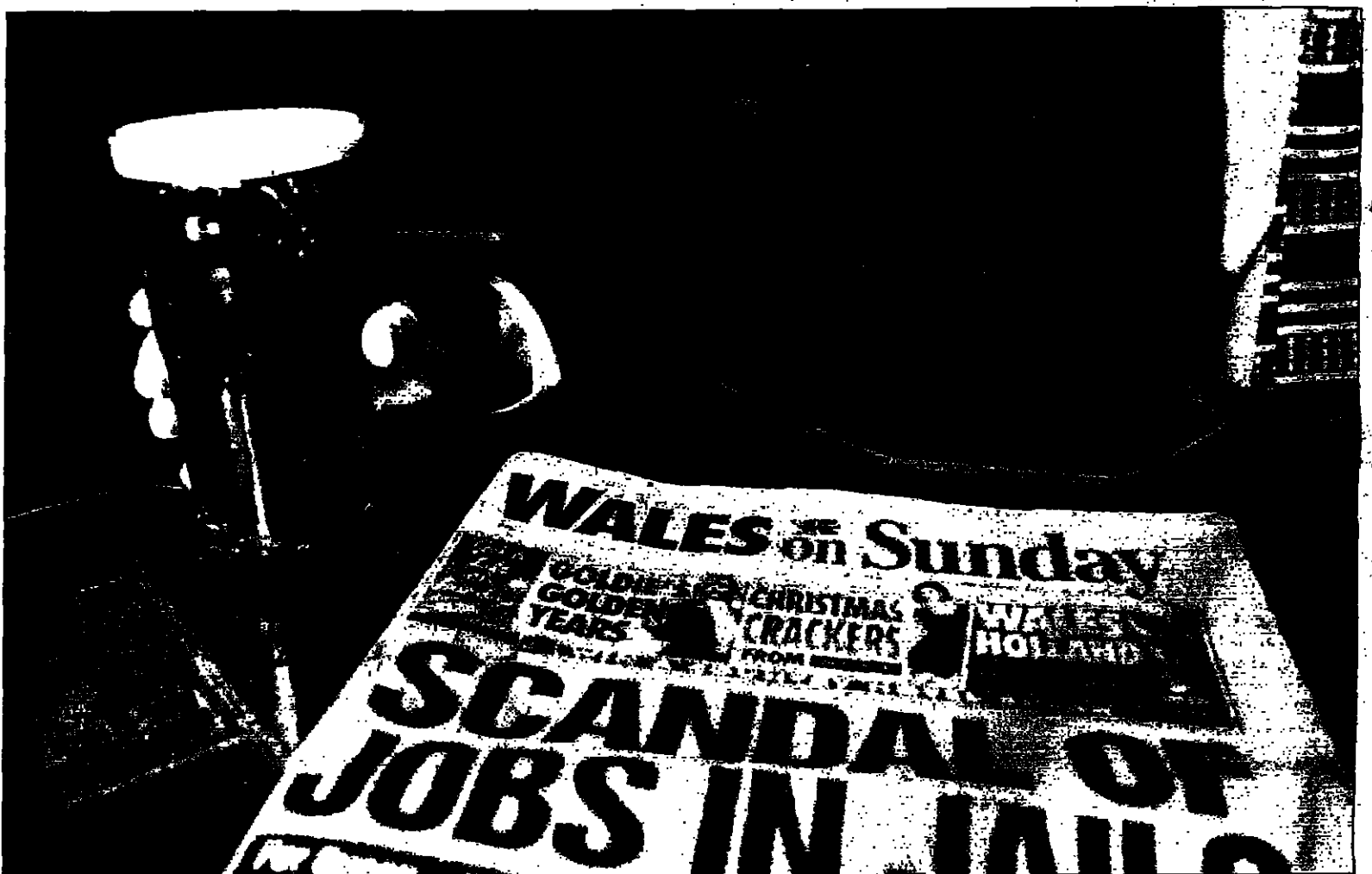
He said he would make the committee to summon Mr Heseltine to give evidence. The Deputy Prime Minister told BBC radio: "Robin Butler's note to me made it clear his view, with which I totally agreed, that departments in carrying out this responsibility should use their political special advisers." Asked why the memo had passed between civil servants, he said: "The important thing is to be sure we don't use civil servants for this purpose."

He accused Labour of waging a "dirty tricks" campaign against him, and attacked Baroness Symons, a newly-appointed Labour life peer and former head of the First Division Association of senior civil servants. Sir Robin told her of his ruling in a letter on Friday. "Within hours of Robin Butler having made clear that the position was satisfactory, this particular story was leaked," said Mr Heseltine. Earlier, Lady Symons told the BBC: "I'm not concerned with the party politics of this at all. I'm concerned with civil service political neutrality being protected." She said particular care to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate uses of civil servants must be taken in the run-up to elections.

Sabbath tippie breaks Welsh drought

Tony Heath

The weather was unseasonably dry in Wales yesterday but for the first time in more than a century, the whole Principality was wet, because every pub was open for Sunday drinking. Last Wednesday's referendum lifted the ban in Dwyfor, the last bastion of the shuttered Sabbath, by a majority of at least 2-1. Customers queued early outside the Coach Inn, at the seaside village of Cynnon Fawr, near Caernarfon. Overnight, landlord Steven Williams decorated it with bunting and unfurled a flag saying: "We Are Open on Sunday". At noon his son and daughter cut a red ribbon. The first drink was on the house, and Mr Williams was delighted: "It's good to have come into the 20th century."



Liquid assets: A Portmadog pub yesterday, when the Principality's last parched enclave joined the 20th century

Photograph: Dave Kendall

saw people having to turn away on a Sunday. Gareth Hughes, a barman at the Golden Fleece, in Tremadog, is one of many pub staff welcoming the change. "In many pubs, part-timers work on a rota. The chance to help out on Sundays will put a

bit more cash into our pockets," he said. Brian Jones, a farmer, who was enjoying a pre-lunch drink, declared: "Locals like myself appreciate this - and there's no doubt that tourists will too."

Opening Council to bring week-long opening across Wales. Since 1961, when districts were legally entitled to hold referendums at seven-yearly intervals, the "wet" movement has advanced. And last week's poll ended

the anomaly which confused visitors and affected the takings in "dry" areas. David Baird-Murray, a Llandrindod Wells hotelier, who chairs the council, was relieved: "It's been about the public's freedom of choice. At last common sense has prevailed."

The Reverend Iwan Llwyd Jones, a leader of the "dry" campaign, was respectful but resigned: "It's bitterly disappointing to see something special like Sunday disappearing for good."

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Schools struggle to cover curriculum

Judith Judd
Education Editor

The national curriculum is still too crowded in junior schools despite the Government's efforts to slim it down, says the first official report on the new timetable. Most teachers believe the new slimmed-down curriculum for 5- to 14-year-olds is an improvement on the old one but that in some subjects they are struggling to cover all the material required. Teachers of 7- to 11-year-olds, the age group whom inspectors say are the worst taught, have the biggest problems. Far from neglecting the basics, these teachers, the evidence shows, are spending so much time on English, maths and science that they may be squeezing out other subjects. Two years ago, ministers asked Sir Ron Dearing, head of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, which advises the Government on the curriculum, to cut back the curriculum after teachers complained that it was overloaded.

The decision to review all subjects came six years after the national curriculum was introduced and after there had already been a series of changes which left most teachers bewildered. Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, has promised there will be no more changes until the year 2000. The report from the authority, designed to show whether revision will be needed, says that schools find the new curriculum much more manageable and straightforward than the old. But the report, based on school visits and interviews with teachers and experts, suggests some worries remain. In English, teachers have difficulty covering the material required for reading. In maths, some primary teachers say they cannot squeeze everything into the time available. Sir Ron aimed to free up time to allow schools to offer subjects not included in the prescribed curriculum but that has not happened. The authority says: "Many schools have used the freed-up time... to concentrate on the national curriculum subjects rather than to extend the curriculum into areas such as modern foreign languages or environmental studies."

The report also says lack of funds is preventing teachers from meeting all curriculum requirements. Few schools are teaching Information Technology properly, because they do not have enough computers, or lack suitably trained teachers. The report says it is too early to say whether the curriculum is raising standards but it has led some teachers to change their methods.

BBC to correct pledges paper

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

The BBC conceded yesterday that its "Statement of Promises to Viewers and Listeners" needed to be corrected to remove suggestions that its main broadcasting rivals did not offer a full range of programme genres in peak time. The misrepresentation in the statement, which outlined the BBC's 230 promises to licence-payers, last week infuriated Channel 4 and ITV, which both called on the BBC to act swiftly to remedy the mistake. As reported in *The Independent*, the two rival broadcasters said the BBC should withdraw the document, which is being offered to as many as 10 million households to help prove that the BBC offers value for money. The list of programme genres on page 7 of the 50-page document suggested that Channel 4 broadcast no natural history, contemporary music

or non-serial comedy in peak time. It also implied that ITV had no factual programmes during peak hours. The BBC explained yesterday that the list was based on strict criteria: "A broadcaster must transmit UK-made programmes in each category for more than half an hour in an average week at peak time," between 6pm and 10:30pm. In a letter to *The Independent*, published today, the BBC said: "We should have stated the criterion for inclusion [of programming] and how the calculations were arrived at. We will correct this in further print runs of the promises."

Diplomats to join trade spotting business

Anthony Bovins
Political Editor

Trade spotting, the promotion of exports and inward investment, is to be made a central function of the Diplomatic Service at all British missions overseas, a Government White Paper will announce today. The change of gear for the embassies and high commissions has been agreed by Ian Laing, President of the Board of Trade, and the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, who will make a Commons statement on the White Paper.

"Global Free Trade And Foreign Policy", this afternoon. The impact of the policy was blunted yesterday by a leaked letter from John Major's office, in which a member of his staff wrote: "Presentation will obviously be crucial if the White Paper is to achieve the impact we want."

The Prime Minister noted there is not much of the paper which can be seen as identifiably new and that distilling from it a convincing action plan may not be easy. "Delivering the message in an imaginative and headline-catching way will therefore be particularly important."

The key message of the White Paper is that diplomacy can be improved by trade and that exports can be helped not only by inward, foreign investment in Britain, but also by British investment overseas. A Government source said yesterday that the White Paper marked a stronger commitment to the promotion of trade "from the heart of the Foreign Office". Trade promotion was no longer being seen as something beneath ambassadors and all big missions already have strong commercial teams. "But it is now going to be a central and not an ancillary function," the source said.

The White Paper will mark a change in the relationship between the Foreign Office and the Department of Trade and Industry, with the creation of a joint export promotion directorate which will have the job of making sure that the new policy penetrates all parts of the Diplomatic Service. "There is already a greater export consciousness within the Foreign Office but it does need a push," the source said. Nevertheless, as the DTI's White Paper on competition, announced in June, £5,000 British and local company visits were cancelled by overseas polls last year and the same polls also cancelled 6,000 specific information services for British business. "The Government provides a range of services delivered through a worldwide network of over 200 commercial posts overseas," the White Paper said. "These are backed up by a DIT staff in London which included more than 100 export promoters, seconded from the private sector."

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NHS fertility treatment hit by cash row

Liz Hunt
Health Editor

Many couples eligible for NHS fertility treatment are missing out because of a dispute between health authorities and GPs over who pays for the fertility drugs they need.

A growing number of health authorities will pay for one or two cycles of *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) treatment but not for the drugs necessary to stimulate a woman's ovaries beforehand.

Instead, couples are being referred back to their GPs, many of whom decline to write the prescription on the grounds that the drugs are part of a hospital treatment and not their responsibility.

The couple must pay for the drugs themselves – between £600 and £800 – or forgo the chance of a child, according to Issue, the National Fertility Association. In some cases, the health authority will, under pressure, pick up the bill for the drugs but are forced to ration treatment even further, treating fewer couples overall.

This reduces still further the already miserly provision of NHS fertility treatment. As rationing of healthcare becomes more explicit in the NHS, some health authorities already ban IVF treatment. An 1993 survey found that about half of health authorities did not provide even the most basic treatment.

The situation has worsened since April when genetically-engineered forms of a fertility drug known as Follistimulating Hormone (FSH), became available. This is a purer form of FSH which is between 25-50 per cent more expensive than older drugs which were derived from the urine of pre-menopausal women.

One couple from south-west London whose GP would not write a prescription for fertility drugs, were told in a letter from the Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow Health Author-

ity that the cost of the FSH for their first cycle of IVF treatment at the Hammersmith Hospital would be refunded if they paid up front. This offer was then withdrawn and the couple have since been told there is no money left for the second cycle of IVF, to which they are entitled, before next April.

"All we got out of the NHS was one treatment cycle and no drugs," said Mrs D, 37, who has asked not to be identified. "This is happening when you are going through all the trauma and upset of treatment." Her husband said the couple would seek private treatment but added: "What happens to the couples who cannot afford

This is like a doctor saying: 'OK, you have cancer, we can cure you – but not unless you buy the drugs'

this?" Mr and Mrs D have spent £1,000 so far on drug treatment.

Tim Hedgley, a spokesman for Issue said it was an "absolutely crazy" situation which the group is very concerned about as it hears of more reports from around the country. "It is like a doctor saying to you 'OK, you have cancer, we can cure it but not unless you buy the drugs yourself'. Infertility is a medical condition and should be treated as one," Mr Hedgley said.

Dr Grant Blair of the Lillie Road Surgery in Fulham who treated Mr and Mrs D, said the issue of prescribing fertility drugs was one of growing concern for the profession.

"I have huge sympathy for

these couples. But there are two issues at stake. The Department of Health advises us not to prescribe drugs unless we are going to be clinically responsible for them. But these treatments are part of an intensive hospital treatment. It is 'community dumping' [shifting the cost from the hospital budget to the community].

The British Medical Association last week advised GPs that sub-fertility treatment should not be considered a "core service" – a treatment they are obliged to provide. Instead, where GPs were willing to become involved in this specialty, they should seek specific contracts with, and extra payment from health authorities.

In a letter to Mr and Mrs D, Julie Dent, Executive Director of the Ealing, Hammersmith & Hounslow Health Authority confirmed that it had contracted with Hammersmith Hospital for IVF treatment in 1995/96 excluding the drugs "on the assumption that GPs would prescribe them."

However, Ms Dent wrote: "As the year has progressed it has become increasingly clear that many GPs are not willing to prescribe the drugs for clinical reasons. In addition, the actual cost of the drugs charged by the drug companies has almost doubled since April causing further problems."

Professor Stephen Killick, director of the Hull IVF Unit, which has just negotiated with the East Riding Health Authority for it to fund fertility treatment on the NHS, including IVF, said the drug issue was a problem. "We have included the drugs in the treatment contract in our case but it does mean we can't treat as many patients," he said. "I am sympathetic to GPs, it's a complicated medico-legal problem." Professor Killick said that one option was to take money from the primary care budget and give it to infertility clinics.



Age concern: An oak, thought to be 600 years old, in Windsor Great Park

Photograph: David Rose

Too old and ugly to hug

Nick Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A campaign to promote the conservation of Britain's oldest trees is to be launched today by seven landscape, wildlife and heritage organisations.

The seven, led by the Government's wildlife conservation arm, English Nature, say these trees are misunderstood. They may look as if they are dying but they have a special place in the country's history and culture. They are also invaluable to lichens, insects, fungi and birds.

The trees are 500 years old or more, and a few may have lasted longer than a millennium. Often their heartwood has rotted away, leaving a cavern inside their great girths and "staghorn" bows, which have been dead for decades, projecting into the sky above the living branches.

The rot holes and hollows provide shelter and nesting places for bats, woodpeckers, tits and flycatchers. Hundreds of insect and spider species depend entirely on the large quantities of dead wood found in such veterans.

Foresters normally fell a broad-leaf tree within 200 years of the start of its life, because after that the quantity and quality of its usable timber declines. The few found dotted round the country have escaped for one reason or another.

Today they remain threatened, sometimes because they are regarded as senile and ugly and sometimes because land owners fear huge pieces of wood breaking off.

Through the Veteran Trees Initiative, the seven organisations want to give people advice on how such trees can be made safe. They also want to build up records of where the veterans are found.

The initiative is being launched in Windsor Great Park, Berkshire. The choice is apt because the Duke of Edinburgh provoked much anguish and criticism last year when many veteran oaks lining an avenue in the park were felled precisely because they had become old and twisted.

Sex and drugs and rock and roll can't stop Liam looking back in anger

We could have put money on it, although the odds would have been so short as to preclude making much of a profit. Liam Gallagher, the surly lead singer of Oasis is in the news again, for the directly predictable offence (allegedly) of possessing cocaine.

"Police sources" quoted in the tabloids yesterday said that Liam was stopped in Oxford Street at 7.25 on Saturday morning by policemen who saw "an unkempt man obviously the worse for wear". The police are now testing the contents of two packages and Liam, released on bail, is due to return to the police station on 30 December.

The singer, now 24, has conformed perfectly to rock-star type so far, making millions, smashing up hotel rooms, moving in with a blonde starlet (herself a veteran pop wife), lunging at the paparazzi, fighting with his older brother and fellow Oasis member, Noel, vandalising music awards and flashing two fingers at the tabloid press.

As the editor of *Musik Week*, Steve Redmond, comments: "I think it would be news if Liam wasn't arrested for possessing cocaine."

The brothers Gallagher have earned the devotion of millions for their homage to the music of the Beatles – some might say for ripping off the Fab Four and updating them for the Nineties – and, of course, John and Paul had well-documented brushes with the law over their fondness for illegal substances.

But where the Sixties' drug culture was mostly associated with attempting to expand one's mind, Liam is trying to anaesthetise his unhappiness and anger – or so says Oliver James, clinical psychologist with an interest in celebrity and its effects.

The Gallagher story, it says, is based on a childhood of dealing with erratic parents who reacted inconsistently to his behaviour, sometimes punishing and sometimes laughing at it. Thus, the expression of anger or dis-

Just another man behaving badly, or someone whose childhood pain is exacerbated by his sudden wealth and fame? Emma Daly reports on the star without an emotional oasis



Wild child: Psychologists claim Liam Gallagher's antics are an attempt to anaesthetise anger Photograph: John Gunion

approval escalated constantly in a household where the young Gallagher were self-confessed delinquents. After a while, Mr James says: "A shout no longer works, so you have to thump him, and then you have to thump him hard."

Life with Oasis, as described by their former road manager, Ian Robertson, in *Wear the Story?* involves endless bickering punctuated by appalling rows. Mr James says. He quotes Noel: "How often do we argue? Every day, hourly," and the boys' mother, Peggy, who says fights between her sons "can start about the most trivial

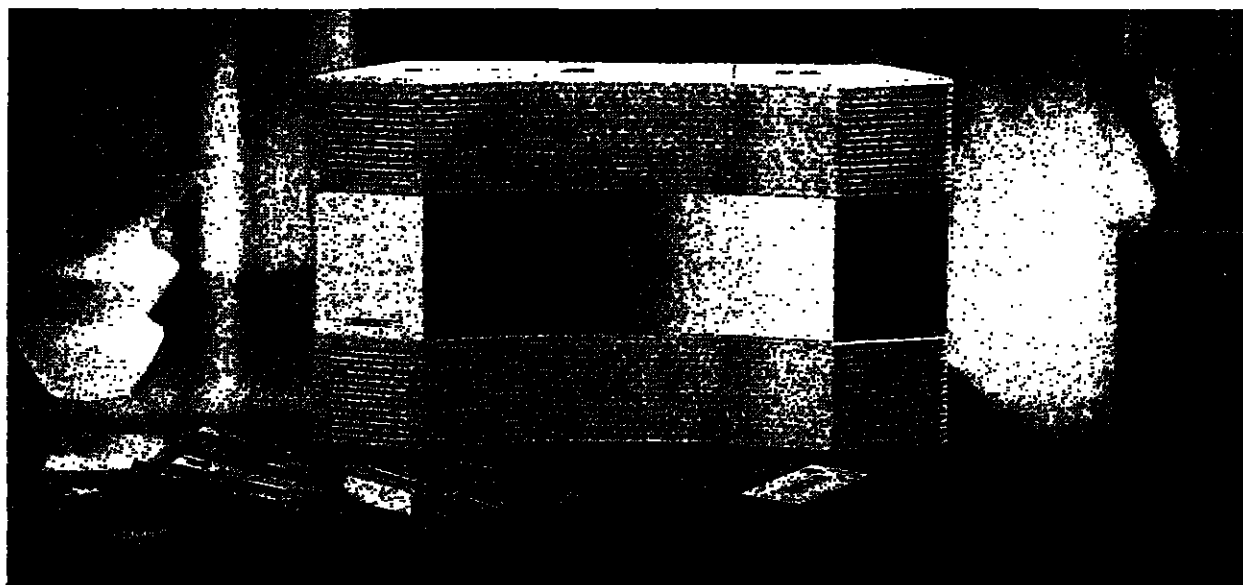
things". The defining point in Liam's life, Mr James maintains, came when he was 11 and saw Noel, then 17, thrashing their drunken, violent father, Thomas. Peggy and the boys moved out that day, and Liam became the apple of his mother's eye. "We were especially close," she has said, adding that Liam "wanted to be no-

ticed", in contrast with his introspective brother (who writes the songs), Peggy adds that Liam "was never wrong – in his view, anyway".

Mr James adds that Liam's problems are compounded by Noel, whom the psychologist describes as intelligent but savage. He famously acknowledged that: "I will never forgive Liam for being born."

Questions about Liam elicit a sign of resignation from Capital Radio's Neil "Doctor" Fox. "The more people report it, the more he'll do it. He's only 24, he's got £10 million in the bank, he thinks he can do what he likes," says the host of the *Pepsi Chart Show*, warning that those fans beyond the hard-core will soon be bored of his antics.

He also feels sorry for Liam (who never actually seems to enjoy anything he does). "None of us have any idea what sort of pressures there are on somebody like him. He's only a young guy and it's happened so quickly that one day he's going to come down to earth with a big bang."



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Charity calls for end to rape victims' ordeal

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Rape victims suffer harassment by defendants and their friends or families, threats to their children, damage to property and can feel compelled to move home to escape persecution, the charity Victim Support says in research published today.

The study, based on a survey of 92 Victim Support schemes and 17 court-based Witness Services which helped 1,500 rape victims in 1995, shows that despite years of cam-

paigning for a better deal for rape victims, they are still hampered in obtaining information about the progress of their cases and face what they view as unacceptable ordeals under cross-examination in the courtroom.

A third of the schemes taking part in the survey said they had helped victims who had been re-assaulted or harassed since the original attack.

Of these, 33 per cent reported contact with victims who had been intimidated by the friends or family of the defendant, in-

cluding harassment and assault; 27 per cent had helped victims harassed by the defendant himself; and 23 per cent had contact with victims forced to move home. Thirteen per cent knew of women who had received threats to their children and 7 per cent reported victims whose property had been damaged. One woman was later murdered by the man who raped her.

Many women did not receive even the most basic information about their case, with only 51 per cent of schemes reporting that they were always or usually informed whether their alleged attacker had been released on bail. This is despite the announcement by Barbara Mills, the Director of Public Prosecutions, in February last year that victims would always be consulted about bail decisions.

The survey paints a bleak picture of the stress still faced by victims over delay, or when court dates are abruptly changed – often just before trial. Dismay over lack of contact with prosecuting counsel is also a recurring theme of the report.

More than 40 per cent of the schemes said women continued to be disturbed by cross-examination by defence counsel, with some victims saying it amounted to character assassination or that the trial was even worse than the rape.

Setting out a series of recommendations, Helen Reeves, the charity's director, said: "This survey confirms the difficulties which women face in trying to obtain justice. Many are too frightened to seek help from the police in case they risk further harassment from the defendant."

"In court, many women report feeling humiliated and intimidated during cross-examination. But even then, convictions are rare. Women need more protection, at every stage of the investigation and trial, before the justice system can be restored."

The report follows the call by Ray White, the new president of the Association of Chief Police Officers, for curbs on intimidations of witnesses and aggressive cross-examination by barristers. In a recent stalking case, defence counsel accused a woman of behaving like a "queen bee that dresses to kill".

'I feel like I was sold out by the system itself'

Mary, one of the 11 victims who gave Victim Support their personal testimonies, was presented with a request to agree to a last-minute guilty plea when her case got to court – but only to a lesser charge of indecent assault, writes Patricia Wynn Davies.

She felt the Criminal Prosecution Service had assured her that he would still receive a custodial sentence, but he got a fine, "an utter insult", she said. She was also subjected to the man's plea in mitigation, which was reported in the local press as if it was evidence, and included defence counsel's statement that she had been "round the block". She said: "I feel like I was sold out by the system itself. I felt really let down."

For Paula, the victim of a gang attack, the trauma came during the police investigation when instead of looking through one-way glass at the identification parade, she had to confront each defendant face to face. "One of them spoke to me and said he was sorry – that upset me even more," she said.

She was assaulted after the court case by a girlfriend of one of the defendants. A fortnight later a family member of one of the defendants found her address and harassed her. She was not offered protection. Although she was only 15 at the time of the trial she was told she

was too old to give evidence from behind a screen.

Jenny still has mixed feelings about reporting her rape. She described the medical examination as "horrendous" and learned that the defendant had got bail through reading it the paper. She got mixed up when giving her evidence. The man had a gun but was described as "the perfect gentleman" by his character witnesses. He was acquitted.

Ruth was another victim faced with down-grading of charges at the 11th hour, despite the police surgeon's opinion that it was one of the most brutal assaults he had seen.

"The policeman walked up and said 'Is it yes?' I felt that I had no option," she said. "I feel that victims are just not represented in court. The control that is taken away from you when you are raped is repeated."

Sarah, who is registered blind, moved house after a dustbin was thrown through her living room window after someone she knew was convicted of raping her. Before the trial, the prosecution barrister warned her that the defence might imply that she was pursuing the case in order to make a claim for criminal injuries compensation.

Like the other interviewees, she said she could not have coped without Victim Support.

Cycle scheme rivals on path to conflict

Carlton Reid and
Christian Wolmar

First there was canal fever, then railway fever and now there's cycle path fever. With Sustrans, the cycle network charity, well into building its 6,500 mile network across the country, a rival private project for another network is to be launched later this month with support from transport ministers.

And just like those previous crazes, the cycle path mania is set to cause bitter rivalry. National Byway will be a 3,000-mile cycle trail on existing minor roads and is the brainchild of Alan Rushton, the race organiser who brought the Tour de France to Britain two years ago.

Rushton and his company, Sport for Television Ltd, have been negotiating sponsorship deals for the route for the past 18 months and the project will be launched on 20 November at a press conference attended by John Bowis, the junior transport minister.

As well as commercial sponsorship, Rushton has also secured map and guidebook provision by AA Publications. Much to the delight of transport ministers, the initiative involves no government funding. Sustrans was awarded £42.5m from the Millennium Fund last year.

While National Byway will be a non-profit-making organisation, it will pay a fee to Mr Rushton. National Byway has support from the Department of Transport, the Rural Development Commission, the Countryside Commission, and the British Tourist Authority. Private sponsors include Canon, Chrysler, Raleigh and Hovis, the biggest, which will contribute at least £200,000.

Sustrans was not told of the project until September and were surprised not to have been informed earlier. Indeed, cycling groups are concerned that the new project is misleading because cyclists will find few facilities on the routes. The new network which starts and ends in Winchester and links 1,000 "secondary heritage sites" – Sustrans already connect most main sites – throughout the UK is little more than a signposting project as the roads, unlike those used by Sustrans, will not be traffic-calmed. One cycling source said: "This is not a proper cycle network. Cars will be able to go fast and this poses a danger. If Mr Rushton were really interested in improving the lot of cyclists, he would have worked with Sustrans, not as a rival."

Alan Kind, chief executive of the Byways and Bridleways Trust said: "It's like waiting for a bus. No cycle provisions for years and then two rival routes come along at once."

Mr Kind is sceptical about the project. He says: "The Byway proposal needs careful thought. Ministers must love it as it is a national scheme costing no money, but what will happen when the Byway crosses busy A roads?" He suggests that alterations will have to be made to the road network, in line with those on the Sustrans network, and that will eventually require government spending.

The difference in approach by Sustrans and National Byway can perhaps best be illustrated by the fact that National Byway will be using donated Chrysler Jeeps to carry out surveys while Sustrans continue to use its collection of folding bikes.



Twin-track proposal: The new Bristol-Bath track may soon have competition Photograph: Christopher Jones

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news

European ruling: Government hoping for concessions as EU court set to give employees minimum rights to time off and holidays

Working hours ruling to launch wave of claims

Barrie Clement and Anthony Bevins

The Government is set to face a wave of legal action on behalf of millions of workers over the working time directive.

Ministers will act quickly to implement the law on the 48-hour week if, as expected, the European Court upholds the validity of the directive tomorrow. But they cannot possibly meet the 23 November legal deadline for enactment of the directive, set three years after a European Union Employment Council pushed through the provision.

The Government challenged the directive in the European Court, arguing that it should not have been dressed up as a health and safety measure.

John Major says it was agreed at Maastricht that social policy should not be smuggled into law under health and safety provisions and he is demanding a further treaty change to rectify the expected judgment. But in spite of weekend reports that Jacques Chirac, the French President, was sympathetic to Mr Major's complaint, the British are not expected to have many allies.

However, the news tomorrow may not be all bad for Britain. There were signs that the defeat could be softened by concessions. The European Commission appeared yesterday to be anticipating demands from the court for the directive to be trimmed back.

The TUC pointed out yesterday that the working time directive's provisions on holidays would have the most direct and widespread impact in the British labour market.

One in eight British workers – most of them part-timers and women – could benefit from new rights to paid annual leave. There were no exceptions to such provisions unlike the clause dealing with a 48-hour week. Official figures showed that almost 2.5 million employees enjoyed no paid holidays, 4.1 million less than three weeks and 5.9 million less than four weeks. The directive introduces a three week legal minimum, increasing to four weeks after three years.

Millions of others will receive new rights to a 48-hour week. Among the exceptions, however, are executives, transport employees, sea fishermen and

doctors in training. For those industries affected by the law there are provisions for flexible application through collective bargaining and scope for employers to persuade their workers to agree to work for longer.

Trade unions are to launch court proceedings on behalf of public sector workers and employees in the privatised utilities. Such workers stand the best chance of successful court action under the directive.

Rodney Bickerstaffe, general secretary of Unison, the country's largest union, said yesterday that it would take action on behalf of individuals "disadvantaged" by Britain's failure to implement the directive on time. Unison is targeting night workers, people who work shifts, part-time workers and those with no entitlement to annual leave.

Roger Lyons, leader of white collar and technical union MSF, said that his organisation would seek to negotiate changes.

John Monks, TUC general secretary, said the Government's appeal against the directive was based on "a narrow-minded resistance to all things European."



Time for change: Women clocking on in Manchester in the 1950s. Under EU rules they could insist on a maximum 48-hour week



Minas, Brazil, 1996. A coffee plantation worker toils in 80 degree heat to earn 56p an hour. It's not enough but it's better than nothing. Nothing is what he earned last week when bad weather stopped the harvest. Nothing is what he will earn for the next eight months, when the season is over.

A family is paid a pittance for an 11 hour day.

A child of 6 is taken from school to work in the harvest season.

A man breaks a leg in transit to work, but gets no compensation.

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Why British stand is just political charade

Opposition to minimal rights doomed from the start

Sarah Helm
Brussels

In June 1993, David Hunt, then Minister for Employment, walked out of a Luxembourg council room to tell the BBC that he had secured a victory for Britain in the heated negotiations over the 48-hour week.

He boasted that the teeth of the directive had been drawn. More than three years later, Britain is struggling to extract the same troublesome molar.

The long battle over directive 93/104/EC, setting rules for a maximum 48 hour working week, as well as paid holiday and breaks, is another example of a doomed British campaign to prevent European integration.

This campaign has been especially inglorious as the battle-ground has been a directive which does little more than offer some workers the right to a decent amount of time off.

Furthermore, in its desperation to stand tough in the face of likely defeat tomorrow, the Government has been spreading more and more disinformation about the way the directive was negotiated and its claimed threat to jobs.

The working hours directive was first proposed in 1990 as part of a tranche of provisions. Britain made a political point of opposing it as too costly for employers. The reality was there was nothing the Government

could do to stop the measure because it had no veto.

The Commission proposed the directive under a health and safety provision of the treaty – article 118a – which is governed by qualified majority voting. As so often happens, therefore, Britain set out to try and claw back powers, which it had already signed away.

The best the Government could hope to do was to water down the directive as it was being negotiated and this ministers successfully did. By the time the law was ready for signing in November 1992, so many concessions had been made that Mr Hunt was able to declare it "toothless".

Britain did not even vote against the directive, it abstained, while promising a legal challenge on the grounds that working hours were not a matter of health and safety.

The Government today presents the directive as a measure which forces all countries to pass laws obliging employers to fix a maximum 48-hour working week. Small factories will be closing down up and down the country, it is claimed.

In fact, every member state has a large degree of flexibility in how they implement the directive. If a particular government wants to interpret the directive to ensure all workers work a maximum of 48 hours a week, it can do so. It can also exclude groups of workers, such as those employed in transport

and junior doctors. Furthermore, the 48-hour rule can be "voluntary". If a particular workforce agrees to work more than 48-hours, the directive need not apply. The 48-hour week rule can also be calculated in some circumstances over a period of up to a year.

As the working hours directive was being finalised in 1992, the Maastricht negotiations were coming to completion and Britain won its opt out from the social chapter. The working hours directive had nothing to do with the social chapter, having been proposed two years earlier under the separate health and safety provision.

Yet today, as they demonise Brussels, the Euro-sceptics, encouraged by the Government, outrageously suggest that enacting the working hours directive under article 118a was a ploy to get around Britain's social chapter opt-out.

Mr Major may now wish that he had never launched the legal challenge to the working hours directive, which looks set to produce a European defeat for him in the run-up to the general election.

The court tomorrow may offer Britain a few crumbs, perhaps ruling that some elements of the directive should be further restricted. But it is hard to see that Europe's judges can agree with a government which claims that working hours is not a matter of health and safety.

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First World War heroes who were just boys

Military records show the efforts of under-age volunteers to get on the front line

Clare Garner

As the nation today observes an unprecedented third two-minute silence on Armistice Day itself – as opposed to the Sunday closest to 11 November – military records revealing the horrors and heroism of the First World War are being released by the Public Records Office.

The first batch of enlistment, medical and discharge records of the 1914-18 war came into the public domain in a year when an unprecedented three national silences have been observed to remember those who died for their country – the first, at the Royal Legion's Festival of Remembrance on Saturday night, the second, the traditional ceremony at Whitehall yesterday, and the third, today's.

The released service documents reveal evidence of the lengths to which under-age volunteers went in order to get past army recruiters and onto the front line. One such case was 15-year-old Pte George Alfred Redrup. He was so desperate to defend his country that he led a double life. Pte Redrup, of Prestwood, Buckinghamshire, managed to join two regiments at the heart of the fighting and earn himself the 1914-15 Star and the Victory Medal, before dying at the age of 19.

"Until now, the medal roll has shown Pte Redrup as two separate soldiers with the same name," said Simon Fowler, the exhibition officer at the Public Records Office at Kew, west London. "The army does not seem to have realised that the two entries refer to the same man."

Only 40 per cent of the nation's service documents have survived. Many were destroyed in 1940, when the London



Proud tribute: Ian Whitehead, of Newcastle upon Tyne, with the HMS Eurus Association at yesterday's ceremony in Whitehall, London

Photograph: Mykel Nicolaou

building in which they were stored was bombed. Three-quarters of those which survived are fire-damaged and therefore not being released at present.

Some historians have hailed today's release of documents as

an "enormously significant" event. The 750,000 or so files could, they say, change people's understanding of the war. But Dr Francisco Romero-Salvado, a lecturer in modern European history at London Guild-

hall University, whose thesis is on the First World War, doubts the documents will add much to scholarship unless they reveal that under-age volunteers were desperate to join the war in 1917-18.

"We know there was this great heroism, patriotism and movement of masses trying to get conscripted in 1914," said Dr Romero-Salvado. "It would, however, be shocking if the documents provided evidence

that these people below-age to sign up still wanted to go and fight in the later stages of the war."

"By 1917 it was not patriotic at all. It was almost a miracle that they managed to finish

the war." It would also, he added, be shocking to find evidence of volunteers younger than 15.

The British Legion, which has led a campaign for a revival of the Armistice Day silence on the

11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month – the time at which the First World War ended in 1918 – believes that more people than for many years observed the two-minute silence at 11am yesterday.

Since the Second World War, the Sunday nearest November 11 – rather than the date itself – has been the day when the Royal Family and political leaders have led the nation in silent tribute to those who gave their lives for their country.

David France, director of the Legion's Armistice Day silence campaign, said: "When we started the campaign last year many firms said they found out too late and did not realise the extent of support. This time supermarkets and other leading firms have been telling us that they intend to announce the silence on their premises on both Sunday and Monday."

The Queen Mother, who is 96, was said to be "very disap-

The 750,000 or so files could change people's understanding of the war

pointed" that a chill kept her away from the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall yesterday.

Meanwhile, two members of the last Labour government have launched a campaign to make Second World War poetry part of the National Curriculum.

Lord Healey and Lord Merlyn Rees believe the standard of *The Voice of War*, a collection of the best poems from the Second World War published this week, is so good it ought to be studied in schools.

"This is the authentic voice of war," said Lord Healey. "This was a grass roots war and the poems are a poignant reflection of what happened. It would be marvellous if today's students were given the chance of studying them."

How Herbie's Nazi past was unearthed

Ian Burrell

Herbie has been exposed as a Nazi. The Volkswagen Beetle, animated in children's films and adored by Sixties hippies and the rave generation alike, was created at the behest of Adolf Hitler.

Volkswagen staffed its production lines with Jewish inmates of Auschwitz concentration camp and Russian prisoners of war.

The company contributed bombs and vehicles for the Nazi war effort and made parts for the V1 buzzbombs that blitzed Britain.

The unpalatable past of one of the world's most loved cars has been uncovered in a 10-year trawl through German archives by two of the country's leading historians.

Last week, to the embarrassment of many Volkswagen executives, the results were published. They could barely have come at a worse time.

In 1998, VW is planning to re-launch the Beetle. The company is also involved in massive investment in Israel, where it is setting up a \$600m manganese plant. And David Herman,

head of its major rival Opel, is Jewish.

Yet it was Volkswagen's own idea to commission the research. The authors, Hans Mommsen and Manfred Grieger, were paid by the company to write an independent history of VW during Nazi times.

The project forms part of a trend among Germany's oldest and biggest companies to bare their souls in an attempt to exorcise the demons of their past.

Jewish pressure groups, including the Holocaust Educational Trust, have been demanding that the companies make an admission of their complicity with the Nazi regime.

The trust is particularly angry that Dresdner Bank, which owns Kleinwort Benson, the British investment bank, has not done enough to apologise for its close relationship with the SS and the Nazi party.

By contrast, Deutsche Bank hired five independent historians to write a corporate history of the bank, which detailed its part in Aryanisation and the dispossession of Jewish property, for which it said the bank bore a moral guilt.



People's car: Adolf Hitler at the inauguration ceremony of the Fallerleben Volkswagen factory in 1938. Photograph: AP

Daimler-Benz, commissioned a similar history and has voluntarily paid out more than £6m in compensation to former slave

workers. The Third Reich used around 10 million people for slave labour, working for such

companies as Siemens, Krupp and AEG.

The German courts have now given the slave labourers, mainly from eastern Europe, the right to sue companies like VW for their suffering.

The story of Volkswagen and the Nazis, entitled *Volkswagen and its Workers in the Third Reich*, could form the basis for their actions.

It details how Hitler commissioned the Beetle from car designer Dr Ferdinand Porsche and then ordered the building of *Kraft durch Freude Stadt* – Strength through Joy Town – to house the production workers.

When war started, the production lines switched to making *kubelwagen* personnel carriers and *schwimmwagen* amphibious vehicles.

Jonathan Mantle, author of *Car Wars*, which analysed twentieth century politics through the eyes of the car companies, said that all car manufacturers had accepted that in times of war they had to strike a deal with the government of the country in which they were operating. "All successful car companies in the first part of the twentieth century have always been synony-

mous with the military destinies and ambitions of their host country."

He said that General Motors, through its German subsidiary, had contributed to the Nazi war effort and that BMW had been a greater user of slave labour than Volkswagen.

"Daimler-Benz were much closer to the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler than Volkswagen were. The Daimler-Benz badge used to hang next to the swastika at rallies."

Mr Mantle said evidence suggested that disclosures about a car company's shady history were likely to have no influence on potential buyers.

His theory is borne out by Britain's own reluctance to take over Volkswagen when the Beetle plant was offered to the Allies as part of a package of war reparations; moral decisions never came into it.

"It's the most God-awful design I ever saw," said Lord Nuffield, of the British Motor Corporation. "All the wrong way round."

DAILY POEM

Portrait of the Town Leonard

By Louise Erdrich

I thought I saw him look my way and crossed my breast before I could contain myself. Beneath those glasses, thick as lead-burred windows, his eyes ran through his head, the double barrels of an old gun, sick on its load, the trigger held in place by one thin metal bow.

Going toward the Catholic church, whose twin white dunce caps speared the clouds for offering, we had to pass him on the poured stone bridge, for nickels we could act as though we'd not been offered stories. How these all turned out we knew, each one, just had the river eels within its course the line of reasoning.

He went, each morning, to the first confession. The sulking curtains but their lips behind him. Still those in closer pews could hear the sweet and timber sins he'd made up on the spot. I saw a few consider, and take note – procedural. They'd try them out at home.

And once, a windless August, when the sun released its weight and all the crops were burned, he kept watch as the river thickened. Land grew visibly and reeked to either side, till windowed hulks, forgotten death cars reared where dark fish leapt, and gaped, and snatched the air.

Louise Erdrich grew up in North Dakota and is of German-American and Chippewa descent. Novelist and poet, published both sides of the Atlantic, her *Tales of Burning Love* were published this year in the UK. Flamingo released *Jacklight*, her second poetry collection, from which this poem is taken. Last week.

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Italy's middle classes unite against taxes

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

Any illusions that Italy would find it easy to sell the pain of European integration to its own electorate were definitively shattered this weekend, as more than half a million of the country's conservative middle classes descended on Rome to vent their displeasure at tax increases in the forthcoming budget.

Heeding the call of the opposition, led by Silvio Berlusconi, the former prime minister, and Gianfranco Fini of the reformed neo-fascist National Alliance, armies of shopkeepers, small businessmen and low-ranking

professionals converged on the capital from every corner of the country on Saturday afternoon, turning the streets of central Rome into a huge seething tide of people and bright anti-government banners.

"No government can work against us," Mr Berlusconi proclaimed to loud cheers in the closing rally. "We are the Italy that goes to work and produces, the industrious, patient and responsible Italy that can decide, if pushed, that it's not going to take it any more."

With parliament due to vote this Thursday on the 1997 budget, an unprecedented austerity package aimed at squeezing Italy into the single

European currency from the word go, the crowd gave a noisy thumbs-down to an array of proposed tax increases including the "Euro-tax", a one-off levy for next year totalling some 12.5 trillion lire (£5bn). Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister, was depicted in banners as Pinocchio, and his government accused of misleading and mismanaging the country.

It was an extraordinary gathering, made up of the kind of people who normally sit at home and turn their noses up at the kind of people who go out on demonstrations.

Beneath the impeccably proper surface, however, was a wellspring of

Poujadist resentment and latent violence. The demonstrators screamed swear words and sexual insults at government ministers and cried for them to be shipped off to Rwanda or the Congo; one small group of unreconstructed Fascists vowed revenge for their brothers "murdered by the servants of the state".

Mr Berlusconi himself railed at the "fiscal dictatorship" of the government and happily encouraged slogans depicting him as a victim of the political and judicial establishment. His attitude made clear that the core purpose of the demonstration was purely political: a show of strength by an opposition that had up to now

shown little taste or talent for taunting Mr Prodi's six-month-old administration, and support for Mr Berlusconi, as his political career is ever more compromised by corruption and business malpractice charges.

The overwhelming success of the demonstration significantly broadened the issue, however. It proved that the country is still irreconcilably split down the middle between the Berlusconi-Fini brand of right-wing populism and the cautious, intellectual pragmatism of Mr Prodi and his struggling Olive Tree coalition. That sense of division, in turn, is a worrying portent of the kind of unrest

Italy could see once the 1997 budget really begins to bite.

The great unmentioned subject of Saturday's rally was Europe, but Europe and the price of entry into monetary union was ultimately what it was all about. The subject went unmentioned because the vast majority of Italians, especially the merchant middle class, still believes in Europe; even Mr Berlusconi could not afford to disapprove of the austerity budget in itself, so he chose to complain about the preference for tax increases over spending cuts instead.

Sooner or later, though, open hostility to Europe seems likely to surface and with it all the thorniest

issues in Italian politics, particularly the tension between the affluent north and the under-developed south. As the eminent commentator Eugenio Scalfari pointed out yesterday, the 1997 budget is just the beginning and another dose of austerity, probably in the form of cuts in pensions, will come along next year.

"The middle classes will have to choose whether they want to put off our entry into the European Union or else agree to pay the price or it," he wrote, adding that logic must lead them to the latter conclusion. To judge by the mood in Rome on Saturday, logic may not be the prime consideration out on the streets.

Sexual abuse scandal hits US Army

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Five years ago, the Tailhook scandal struck a blow at the US Navy's image from which that service has yet entirely to recover. Now it is the turn of the Army, rocked by a growing scandal of institutionalised sexual abuse and misbehaviour at one of its largest training facilities which is raising basic questions about the place of women in the armed forces.

A stream of revelations over the past four days has sent the US news media flocking to the giant Aberdeen Proving Ground north of Baltimore, in Maryland, where some 11,000 young military personnel, up to 20 per cent of them women, come every year to be instructed in the maintenance and repair of weapons, tanks and other heavy equipment.

If evidence released by the

Questions are now being asked about the basic wisdom of mixing the sexes in the military

Army is to be believed, however, an equally important skill for the female trainees has been to dodge the attentions of drill instructors taking advantage of their status to demand, and on occasion obtain by force, sexual favours from their charges.

So far three drill instructors, including one company commander, have been formally accused of offences ranging from rape and forcible sodomy to adultery, which in the US military is a crime. According to the charges one of them threatened his victim with the words, "If anyone finds out about this, I'll kill you."

Inevitably, the episode has drawn comparisons with the Tailhook scandal, when the 1991 annual convention of Navy aviators at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas degenerated into a veritable bacchanalia of sexual harassment and abuse that led to Congressional hearings and

may have contributed to the suicide last May of Admiral Jeremy Boorda, the Navy's chief of operations and senior uniformed officer.

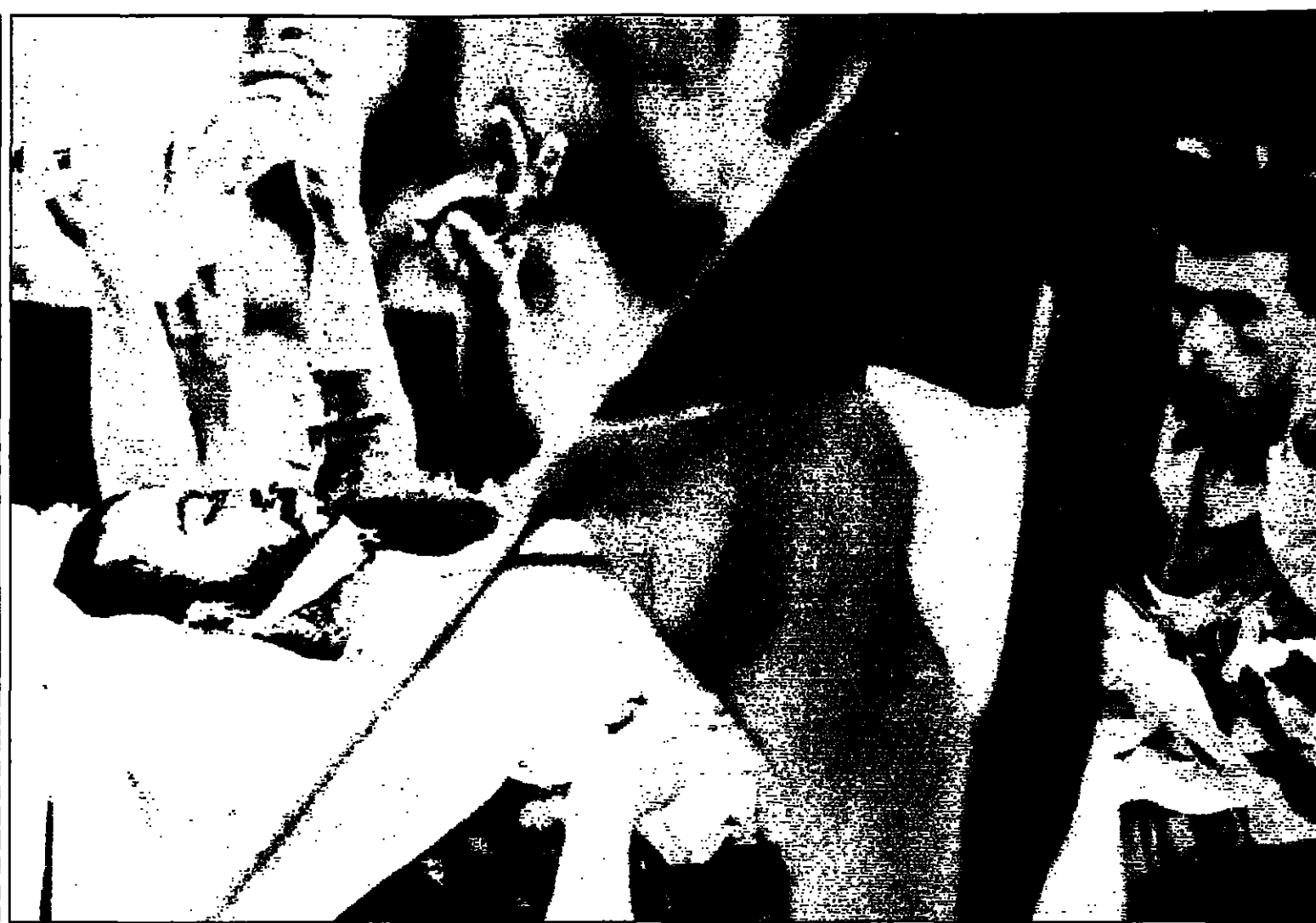
Well aware of the damage caused by the Navy high command's initially weak response to Tailhook, the Army this time has acted swiftly and vigorously: apart from the three instructors charged, 20 other soldiers, both officers and of non-commissioned ranks, have been suspended as of yesterday, while almost 1,500 calls have been logged on a toll-free 'hot line' set up to register complaints arising from what Major General Robert Shadley, commander of the Aberdeen facility, has called "the worst thing I have ever seen in the army."

And in many ways the allegedly systematic sexual harassment and licence at Aberdeen, if confirmed, would be more serious than Tailhook. For one thing, if the charges thus far are to be believed, the practice was underpinned by intimidation. Second, unlike Tailhook, the incidents took place on base and in uniform, and indeed seem to have grown out of routine life at the base.

Nor may the scandal be as straightforward as it at first appeared. Responding to the allegations, the three men charged say they have been falsely accused. They do not deny having had sexual relations - but insist these were consensual.

As a result, questions are now being asked about the basic wisdom of mixing the sexes in the military. Rigorous separation between them in the barracks at Aberdeen has failed to prevent affairs such as now the level of suspicion there that women cadets have been ordered not to move around the base without a "buddy", or chaperon, while no drill commander dare be left alone with a female trainee.

But the army insists that desegregation will continue, whatever the current future. "Sure, we could solve this by not having male instructors," the Army Secretary, Togo West, said this weekend. "But that answer disregards the nature of our society... there is no segregation unacceptably in the defence of our country."



Angry mourning: Palestinians protesting at yesterday's funeral of Atallah Amreh, 36, a father of nine killed by an Israeli bullet

Photograph: AP

Israel fails to soothe West Bank

Patrick Cockburn
Deir Qadis, West Bank

Specks of blood on the stones of the dirt road mark the flight of the villagers of Deir Qadis after Israeli soldiers shot dead one and wounded 12 when they demonstrated against the confiscation of their land to build a Jewish settlement.

It was the worst violence on the West Bank since 60 Palestinians and 15 Israelis were killed in September after Israel opened a tunnel in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem. Amid fluttering Palestinian flags, police carried the body of Atallah Amreh, 36, a father of nine, to his grave in the nearby village of Niliin.

Earlier in the day, some 200 people from four Palestinian vil-

lages north-west of Jerusalem and close to the border between the West Bank and Israel had marched to a hill where Israeli bulldozers were clearing land to expand a settlement of ultra-orthodox Jews at Kiryat Sefer. "We are losing the equivalent of 1,250 acres," says Qais Nabhan, a local schoolteacher. "We won't have any land left to build on."

When the villagers reached the place where the bulldozers were at work, soldiers told them to go home because they had no permit for their demonstration. Mohammed Abu Sabr, who was one of the marchers, said that "many of demonstrators were quite old, in their forties or fifties."

A confrontation started when an elderly man was pushed

over and young Palestinians started jostling the soldiers. The soldiers first fired in the air and then at the legs of villagers from close range. They responded by throwing stones, and the soldiers began to fire at chest height. Mr Amreh was shot as he turned to leave. As with the violence on 5 September, the Israeli army responded to stone-throwing with live rounds aimed to kill.

The incident shows that the easing yesterday of the Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza, preventing workers reaching employment in Israel, is unlikely to reduce tensions. The speed with which Israel is pushing ahead with building what is in effect a new settlement near Kiryat Sefer is also likely to undermine any re-

maining Palestinian confidence in the Oslo accords.

Work at expanding Kiryat Sefer, home to ultra-orthodox Jews housed in pink-coloured six- or seven-storey blocks, started a week ago and the local children have been throwing some stones at the soldiers,

says Mr Nabhan. Despite the shooting earlier in the day, five yellow bulldozers were working yesterday evening at levelling terraces and pushing over olive trees. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, has promised to increase numbers of the 140,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza.

Meanwhile, in one of the few signs of reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians in recent months, the descendants of Jews who used to live in Hebron

before the massacre of 1929, in which 67 of them were killed by Palestinians, returned yesterday to disassociate themselves from the present-day Israeli settlers.

"The settlers today don't represent the old community of Hebron," said Moshe Galmor on meeting the Palestinian mayor, Mustafa Natshe. He added: "We have no connection with them."

The 48 families of Israeli settlers in central Hebron, who believe that the West Bank and Gaza were given by God to the Jews and that the 2.5 million Palestinian residents are there on sufferance, often portray themselves as the successors to the pre-1929 Jewish community in Hebron. The present-day settlers are defended by 1,000 Israeli troops.

United Nations punishes biggest debtor

David Usborne
New York

The United States is smarting from a humiliating loss in elections at the United Nations for a place on a key finance committee. The unprecedented snub reflected a deepening anger among members over Washington's continuing failure to pay its UN dues.

Although sniping in UN corridors about America's delinquent standing on contributions and, more recently, about its messy efforts to deny a second term to the Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, is almost endemic, there was undisguised astonishment at its failure to secure one of sixteen highly coveted seats on the body, known as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budget Questions (ACABQ).

Membership for the coming year of the ACABQ, which makes the most important decisions about UN spending, was decided in an annual secret ballot of all UN states last Friday. It is the first time that the US, which is supposed to provide a quarter of the organisation's budget, has been passed over.

Tension continues to gather, meanwhile, over the fate of Mr Boutros-Ghali. While diplomats strain to see any sign of softening in the US position, formal discussions on the Security Council are likely to begin in about a week. The list of possible successors is now about thirty-long.

A recent attempt by the US Ambassador to use a private lunch with Mr Boutros-Ghali's wife, Leah Boutros-Ghali, to ask her to help convince her husband to step aside apparently backfired, sources said. "She responded that she would do no such thing," one remarked, with a touch of glee.

Reaction to America's ousting from the budget committee ranged, meanwhile, from unmitigated, almost vengeful, joy to deep concern over the longer-term consequences. "Maybe now Washington will wake up and smell the coffee," one UN official remarked.

"This should show them at last that the maxim is true: there is no representation without taxation."

The US itself offered no sign of humility. "The lack of American participation on the ACABQ will inevitably diminish the significance of that body in UN budget deliberations," an official offered. And for good measure, he went on: "The outcome of the ACABQ elections adds even more to the importance of electing this year a new, highly-qualified, reform-oriented Secretary General for the UN."

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Helen Womack
Moscow

At least 13 people were killed here yesterday when a mafia gang blew up their rivals as they gathered to mourn at a cemetery. Victims were hurled through the air by the remote-controlled bomb and their remains strewn over graves.

Security services said 130 people had met at Koltovskoye cemetery for a service for Mikhail Likhodet, the head of an Afghan war veterans' organisation who was killed in a

bomb blast in 1994. "I saw one mutilated body lying on a grave some 30 metres from the centre of the blast," said Artyom Danilchyna, a Reuters correspondent.

Among the dead were Likhodet's widow, Yelena, who had escaped with injuries in the blast that killed her husband two years ago, and the man who succeeded him as the head of the Afghan War Invalids' Foundation.

The explosion was "probably linked to a settling of old scores", said Colonel Stanislav

Zhorin, of the Federal Security Service, which has taken over from the old KGB and now concentrates on fighting organised crime and terrorism rather than persecuting political dissidents. It was probably no coincidence that the head of another Afghan war veterans' group, which had a dispute with Likhodet's organisation, survived an assassination attempt recently.

Although many invaders from the war in Afghanistan struggle to survive in the new capitalist Russia by begging from mo-

torists at crossroads, others enjoy a very different lifestyle as their organisations make use of tax breaks given to the hand-capped for commercial ventures. Veterans of the Soviet Union's adventure in Afghanistan as well as hardened fighters who have survived Russia's equally disastrous intervention in Chechnya are also in demand as bodyguards to the mafia.

Bombings and shootings are so common in Moscow that the press reports only the most spectacular. Innocent by-

standers are unlucky if they get caught in the crossfire of turf battles, which generally concern only Russian businessmen.

But police are still hunting the killer of Paul Tatum, an American who became embroiled in a dispute with his Russian partners in a hotel venture here.

He was shot in an underpass last Sunday in a murder which has shocked the foreign community and which may, for a while at least, make other Western businessmen think twice about investing in Russia.

significant shorts

US enraged by Slovenian PM's Suu Kyi attack

The US was enraged by an unprecedented stoning attack on the motorcade of the Burmese democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and demanded Rangoon punish the culprits. The Nobel Peace laureate was unhurt. *Reuter - Rangoon*

Slovenian PM's guessing game

Janez Drnovsek, Slovenia's Prime Minister, expected his Liberal Democrats to emerge as the biggest party in an election but would not say which others he may invite to join his coalition. *Reuter - Ljubljana*

Bhutto to face legal charges

The Pakistani caretaker government is preparing charges against ousted prime minister Benazir Bhutto and her husband, Asif Zardari. *Reuter - Islamabad*

Poll test for Mexican party

Mexico's ruling party, facing growing economic unrest, was fighting to keep its grip on power as the crucial Mexico state, the country's biggest, held local polls. *AP - Mexico City*



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Blair must take the plunge on voting reform

In the privacy of dimly-lit Westminster backrooms, the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties are nervously embracing. For months there have been cautious fumbblings between consenting adults as the two main opposition parties explore their common interest in, above all, the reform of British politics.

Of the two, the Liberal Democrats are the more ardent and radical partner – not surprising, perhaps, in the smaller party, with more to gain – while new Labour is just a little more prudish. On many of the issues, they basically agree. These include the importance of Scottish devolution, of restoring some of the power of local government, of introducing new procedures in the Commons and reforming the Lords, and incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights into British law. There are differences about the details, and in some cases they are important differences. But, as on other issues, such as education, there is enough common ground for common positions to be articulated, should the party leaders wish.

The great question, however, is voting reform for the Commons. It is what most separates most Liberal Democrat politicians from most Labour ones. In the end, if Labour remain committed to the current system of choosing MPs, then that party's relationship with the Liberal Democrats can be no more than a flirtation. Given that Paddy Ashdown's party has been losing ground in local government by-elections recently, some Labour people will advocate a swift parting once Tony Blair wins his hoped-for majority. And for the Lib Dems, alliance with Labour without significant progress towards a new voting system would be a sordid trap, leading nowhere. But what would be best for the country?

Voting reform is unlike many other

issues in that it cannot be honestly disentangled from the interests of the parties. The system has disproportionately favoured the Conservative Party, and it is not surprising that Tories are disproportionately in favour of it. Proportional representation would most boost the Liberal Democrats; the Lib Dems are enthusiastic boosters of PR. Everyone claims to support one or other system on the basis of principle.

These principles, taken one by one, sound fine. There is the principle that an elected Member should look after a single constituency, acting as advocate for all voters – a principle which many MPs endorse. That goes, too, for the principle that all MPs should be basically equal in status, elected as local representatives by these same constituencies. Those principles, taken together, point inescapably to the existing first-past-the-post system. But they are incompatible with the principle that each vote should have a similar value, and with the principle that the nation's choice, party by party, should be reflected in the House of Commons. So how should we choose, particularly when we know that the conflicting principles are, anyway, a disguise for party advantage?

It is a question of democratic priorities. We believe that in a country whose binding belief is fairness, restoring belief in the fairness of the voting system matters more than defending one-seat constituencies at all costs. (One-seat constituencies may be a British tradition, but like many of our traditions they are more recent than many people realise: the Victorians fought in multi-member seats and so did some pre-1945 moderns.) We also think that a country of avid and shrewd consumers, accustomed to wide choice, is fed up with the black-or-white, him-or-him choice offered by most constituencies.

Even in swing constituencies, taken especially seriously by the party strategists, the choices can seem absurd. Why should one have to choose between, say, an old-style piston-driven socialist and a smirking anti-European libertarian Thatcherite? Surely our judgements deserve more sophisticated options than that?

Across great swathes of the country, voters are in effect disenfranchised by being Labour or Tory supporters in the "wrong" areas; thus the leftishness of Scotland is exaggerated, and so is the Tory domination of the south. These exaggerations help to push the nation itself apart. So in principle (that word again) we favour changing the electoral system to one that reflects more clearly the preferences of voters and flattens out the apparent gulfs in opinion between different parts of the country.

What, though, of the sordid, behind-the-scenes deals and coalitions that would

be forged by a fairer system, in which one party would be much less likely to have an overall majority? These would happen, yes. They do in almost every case where PR is used. But defenders of the status quo should ask themselves this: what have the past few years in politics been but the revelation that the present party system is essentially about pacts and coalitions – only within the closed ranks of one or other party? The Conservative Party is the same coalition that, in other countries, exists between moderate Christian Democrats and hard-line nationalists.

Deals are made here, just as in Germany or the Netherlands, but they are made in the unit corner of the whips' office, not out in the relative open, between party leaders. Part of the malaise of modern British politics is that legitimate political differences within the main parties are submerged, so that any dis-

cussion or expression of them emerges as "split" or "division". Would it be worse for our country if the pro- and anti-British Tories argued openly from different parties? Or if the socialist opponents of Tony Blair had their own small party in the Commons, rather than hiding their feelings and sniping from inside the Labour coalition?

The same argument applies to those who say that a fairer voting system would give undue influence to small parties, such as the Liberal Democrats, since they could control the balance of parliamentary power. Today, the anti-Maastricht Tories are just such a small, influential balancing group. So are the Ulster Unionists. So, in different circumstances, are the pro-monetary union supporters of the Chancellor.

We do not think that supporters of the present system are knaves, or that PR is a path to Heaven; judging voting systems is about effects, not ethics. But we think a change would reinvigorate our democracy, breathe new life into the Commons, and could be achieved without destroying anything essential in British politics. Given the disposition of political forces, it might split the Conservatives while only splintering Labour, and thus benefit Tony Blair at the expense of John Major. But if most people became disillusioned with Labour, or hostile to European Union, the balance of advantage would alter.

But favouring a new electoral system, as we do, is only the half of it. The next question is to hang out your preference as to which alternative system you prefer. Here too, non-party principles are the surest guide. A "list" system, which keeps single-member constituencies but adds a new class of appointed MPs from party lists to even out the differences, would give even more power of patron-

age to the party hacks and apparatchiks. It would allow MPs into the Commons who, freed of the need to respond to constituents, would become full-time careerists, instead of part-time ones. We prefer constituencies of two or three MPs, giving voters a much bigger choice and allowing into Parliament many strong voices that are not heard there today.

First, however, the argument for change must be won. And the person whose mind most needs to change is Tony Blair. He is the fulcrum. Probably, he will be in a position to make this happen, or to prevent it. As he contemplates the odd mating dance going on in Westminster with the Liberal Democrats, he can afford to lift his eyes. This is not just a sordid grope between mutually interested parties. Between now and the election, Blair can move clearly towards supporting reform and help to bring about a fundamental shift in British politics. Or he can retreat to an essentially conservative position, and hope that he and his successors can find a way under first-past-the-post (frankly improbable) to banish Labour's record of defeat in the century to come.

That would be applauded by some Labour partisans as "putting the party first". In fact, it would be more likely to betray Labour's future. Given the likely effect of converting to voting reform – a Tory split, and a moderate centre-left alliance – Blair is in the happy position of seeing Labour's selfish sectional interests coincide with the interest of our democracy as a whole. He must, surely, be beginning to realise what he should do. The Labour leader is cautious, serious and straight. He is not a natural flirter with other parties in dark corners. But the time is close when he should do the decent thing: take a deep breath and lunge towards reform.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Execution of Saro-Wiwa flouted justice

Sir: Richard D North's extensive apology for Shell Nigeria ("Can you be sure of Ken Saro-Wiwa?", 8 November) leaves an unpleasant taste on the eve of the first anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's judicial execution, and the long-delayed visit by Commonwealth foreign ministers to Abuja in a few days' time.

Breath-takingly, it ignores the fact that Saro-Wiwa and the other executed Ogonis never received a fair trial – a matter clearly set out by Michael Birnbaum QC and other international observers; that the Petroleum Minister had threatened punitive action against Shell and BP on 17 July 1995 (as reported by the CHRI mission of that month in Nigeria – *Stolen by Generals*); that the executions by General Abacha defied pleas for clemency by several Commonwealth leaders, which some thought had been heeded; and that Shell, responding to pressure from Amnesty and others, is now incorporating a human rights commitment in its business mission statement.

At a time when many international journalists are having difficulty in getting visas to visit Nigeria, such an unbalanced report – "You can be sure of Shell" – does a disservice to oppressed Nigerians and to the 52 other Commonwealth states which have rightly suspended the military regime from membership. If the eight foreign ministers visiting Abuja on 19 November were to depend exclusively on a dictator's briefing as North has on Shell's, their view would be treated with distrust.

RICHARD BOURNE
Chair, Trustee Committee,
Commonwealth Human
Rights Initiative,
London WC1

Sir: As a former Shell geophysicist, I have to say that Richard North's article defending Shell's role in Nigeria is so riddled with holes it is difficult to know where to start. The underlying truth is that our consumer capitalist society is so dependent on fossil fuels that in its greed to extract them, environmental and social concerns have been downgraded. The mounting effect of externalising these costs will undoubtedly rebound on us unless we shift soon to a sustainable way of life which utilises renewable energy sources.

The only reason that Shell "necessarily deals with authorities of which it strongly disapproves" is because the company group puts profits above ethical principles. Moreover, Shell's argument that if it were to pull out of Nigeria then "someone less committed would go in" is morally indefensible. The same excuse is made with no validity by Western companies and governments in justification of arms sales to oppressive regimes. For North to move from an admission that "100 flares waste a resource equivalent to a quarter of France's gas demand" to the contention that locals benefit because the flares "constitute free light and a means of drying root crops such as cassava" is breathtaking in its crassness. Shell spends less than 0.5 per cent of its profits on community



projects. As for Nigerian government funding of the local communities, Shell as much as admits in North's report that the political structure ensures that the locals of the Niger delta do not, indeed cannot, benefit from Shell's activities there.

It's time the Royal Dutch/Shell Group lived up to its own statement of general business principles in its Nigerian operations. This statement includes the promotion of "measures for the protection of health, safety and the environment for all who may be affected directly or indirectly by their activities". If Shell cannot uphold this then it should withdraw from Nigeria. Dr DAVID CROMWELL
Southampton

Sir: I have been a regular reader of your newspaper since its first edition as I admired fair-minded reporting, so it was all the more of a shock to read Richard D North's appalling piece on the late Ken Saro-Wiwa.

The picture he paints both of Ken's character and motivation, along with the environmental state of the Ogoniland, is completely at odds with the many detailed reports which have been done over the past few years, both by human rights organisations and respecting environmentalists.

Ken Saro-Wiwa was not a saint, I am sure, but he was an extraordinarily courageous man who sacrificed his own comfort and safety to campaign for justice for the Ogoni people. He died a truly terrible death after many months

of torture and near-starvation. Ken was an Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience and the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award and the Goldman Prize for services to the environmental movement. His case was also taken up by International PEN, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.

Can all these organisations be wrong and Mr North be right? DIANA MORANT
London SW3

Right bank

Sir, Your correspondent, CH Standfield, must be sure of his facts before impugning the professionalism of the crew of the KLM flight he travelled on (letter, 9 November).

Aircraft arriving at Heathrow from the north-west and north-east normally route initially towards radio beacons at Bovingdon or Lambourne respectively.

From there air traffic control gives them radar vectors (headings to fly) towards the airport's instrument landing system beams.

The turn on to the ILS localiser beam is usually over the City of London. In other words, a right-wing bank over the City is the norm for traffic approaching from these directions.

J S EVANS
Chesham, Bucks

BBC viewing data clarified

Sir: The data published in our *Statement of Promises to Viewers and Listeners* about the range of programmes broadcast in peak time by BBC1, BBC2, TV and Channel 4 was included in our Annual Report and Accounts published in July. This key performance indicator has been published now for three years in our Annual Report and Accounts without attracting challenge.

The criterion is that a broadcaster must transmit UK-made programmes in each category for more than half an hour in an average week at peak time, that is between 6pm and 10.30pm. The measure is stringent and designed to reveal what the range is across an average week over the year. It is applied fairly; for instance it appears as if BBC1 does not broadcast any natural history programmes. Of course we do, but not to the extent to meet the criterion.

However, we should have stated the criterion for inclusion and how the calculations are arrived at. We will correct this in further print runs.

The plain fact, however, is that last year the BBC broadcast a wider range of UK-made programme types in peak time throughout the year than ITV and Channel 4; and so we should, given our unique method of

funding. We are committed to be more accountable: that means that we must provide evidence of our performance. We will continue to do so, as our licence-payers expect. COLIN BROWNE
Director of Corporate Affairs, BBC
London W1

Stripped ski piste is eco-rape

Sir: Well done for shedding light on the environmental problems of skiing ("Whatever happened to green skiing?", 2 November).

However, the "canny initiative" reported at Les Arcs of stripping the piste of topsoil, removing the rocks, and replanting with hardy alpine grass, is not what I would call an environmental solution.

The plants that had naturally colonised the piste over thousands of years have been replaced with a monoculture of one species. This is not conserving biodiversity. The "environmental" benefit seems to be that less snow needs to be "made".

The rape of the piste is irreversible (and must have required a prodigious amount of energy-wasting earth-moving vehicles into the bargain).

I hope this does not become "good practice" – please do not encourage it by calling it an environmental initiative. NICOLA DAVIES
Swindon, Wiltshire

Schizophrenia no cause for guilt

Sir: Your report (1 November) on research based at the University of Oulu in Finland. A long-term study of over 12,000 people beginning before their birth showed that children born after unwanted pregnancies were at slightly increased risk of schizophrenia in adult life.

The scientific report of this work stressed that the meaning of this curious finding is obscure. Mothers may have had a variety of reasons for not wishing to be pregnant. These include suffering themselves from illnesses which increase the risk of schizophrenia in their offspring, probably by subtle effects on the developing brain. This Finnish study has demonstrated that early physical illness in the newborn may also have this effect; this may be preventable.

Several parents of people with schizophrenia have contacted me, feeling upset and guilty. The inference they drew from your report was that their own children must have been unwanted and unloved. In fact, the research showed quite the contrary: most people with schizophrenia were wanted babies.

I spend a great deal of time helping relatives of those with this distressing and puzzling brain illness. The seeds of schizophrenia may sometimes be sown early in life, but not by parents; it is not their fault. Dr P B JONES
University of Nottingham

Oxford dons fear for green space

Sir: John Patten, in his article about the School of Management Studies at Oxford University ("Lucrative made the spires what they are", 9 November), completely misrepresents both the issue under debate and the reasons why so many voted against the proposal. The question of whether Oxford should or should not have a School of Management was not in question: this has been part of the university's plan for some time. Neither was Mr Said's generosity. The speakers on both sides of the debate fully supported the school and gratefully acknowledged Mr Said's gift.

The issue being debated was whether the school should be on a particular site, and one that had been sold to the university 30 years ago on condition that it was to remain a "green space" in perpetuity.

Those who voted against the motion did so for three main reasons. Firstly, that the site should remain unbuilt on, as was agreed when it was bought; secondly, that the site was offered to Mr Said, and a design for the building decided on, without sufficient consultation with all the university and college bodies concerned; thirdly, that it appears that the governing body of the proposed school would have only a minority representation from the university, with the majority being appointed by Mr Said.

The speakers against the motion were concerned not only with preserving one of the ever-decreasing areas of green space in Oxford's city centre, but also with keeping good faith with the conditions of sale of the land, and with issues of open government within the university. STEVE ROBERTS
Oxford

Sir: I have nothing to do with Oxford or business schools, but I read with dismay the letter from the President of Magdalen College (8 November). He says that "Oxford values its democracy more highly than its short-term reputation". If less than 40 years ago, the Congregation gave an undertaking to leave the site green "in perpetuity", why on earth is it trying to go back on its word? Perhaps the Oxford Dictionary has a different definition of the word "perpetuity" from the rest of us. MARCUS MURPHY
Brussels

Fine Euro-king

Sir: Richard *cœur de lion* (letters 4, 5, 7 November) was a European *par excellence*. The admiring French mark his campaign trail against their king with red rampant lions on gold shields, and the Germans valued him highly enough to keep him captive in one of their castles. For his part, Richard raised English taxes for the rebuilding of Chartres Cathedral while fighting the French king, and together with Blondel took troubadour songs to Germany long before the Beatles. French-speaking and French-educated, Richard cannot have understood a word at Westminster. Give the chap a break and send him to Brussels. MARGARET DAONE
Ramsay, Cambridgeshire

essay

Thank God for the gays

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement commemorates its 20th anniversary in Southwark Cathedral on Saturday. The backwoodsmen are predictably enraged. But, argues Paul Vallely, traditionalists could learn much from those they seek to condemn

So the gay orgy in the cathedral is back in the news. Next Saturday's service in Southwark's Anglican cathedral to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement was condemned at the weekend by church backwoodsmen for "promoting promiscuity and blasphemy". A survey of churchgoers linked to the theologically conservative Evangelical Alliance yesterday claimed that 96 per cent of British congregations believe gay sex to be wrong. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, blustered into the debate to insist that just because gays were being allowed into a cathedral didn't mean that the Church of England was about to alter its muddled stance on homosexuality.

The survey is evidence that a vast number of churches stand by 2,000 years of biblical analysis which concludes that homosexual sex is outside the will and purpose of God, said the Reverend Clive Calver, director-general of the alliance. It is not just the opinions but the vehemence with which they are expressed that has taken the rest of the country by surprise. Until the *Thought for the Day* contributor Anne Atkins launched a vituperative broadside against the event on Radio 4 last month, most of us had assumed that the Church was slowly coming to grips with

the inconsistency of its attitude to homosexuality. But the prejudices clearly lie deeply embedded in the woodwork of the nation's pews. It is hard to justify. It is true that the Old Testament denounces homosexual acts as "an abomination", along with bestiality and incest. But it says the same thing about nudity, eating pork and pawns, and wearing garments made out of more than one fabric. It is not clear what Mr Calver's stance on cotton and polyester shirts or Bird's Eye Fisherman's Pie, but he has not been noticeable in his insistence on the Levitical punishment of death for both parties caught in adultery.

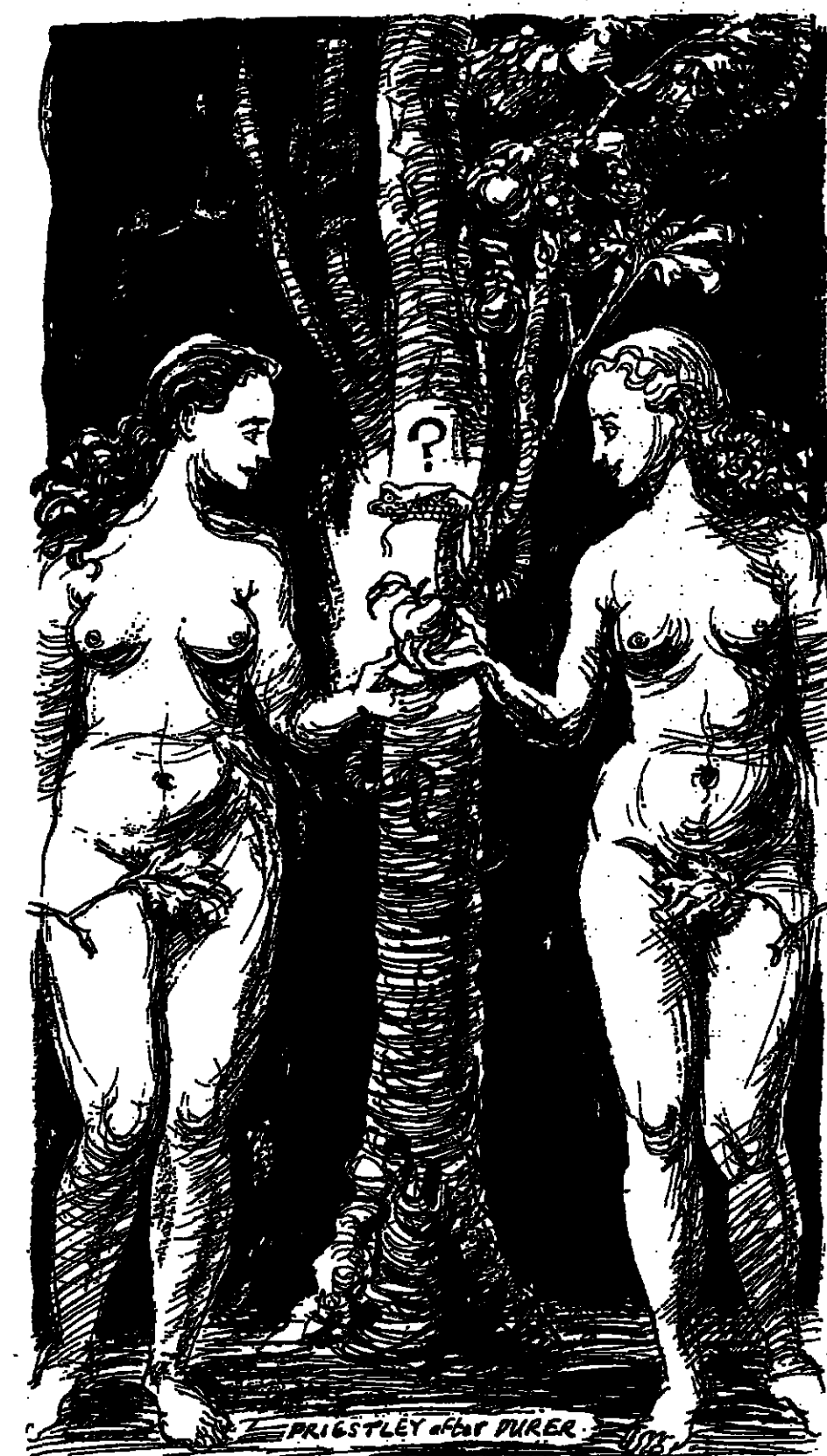
"Abomination" is, anyway, a mistranslation: the Hebrew refers to a violation of ritualistic purity. (Sodom is another oft-uncorrected misconception: most biblical scholars now say that the sin of Sodom was not pederasty but inhospitality to strangers.) On what basis do the biblical fundamentalists select some bits of Leviticus to interpret literally and not others?

The New Testament does not help much. In the Gospels, Jesus never mentions the subject, though he is specific on other detailed issues of morality. Those who accept St Paul's condemnation of homosexual lust do not necessarily accept his other culturally specific injunctions. Believe Paul literally and you will accept slavery,

denounce long hair, require wives to be subservient to their husbands, and never criticise the government (Paul, remember, expected the end of the world within his generation). You would also insist that "women should stay silent in church" - not an injunction to which the voluble Mrs Atkins seems ready to acquiesce.

The fact is that the mainstay of Christian opposition to same-sex relationships rests on tradition. Its core is the principle of the natural law which the early Church drew, using the philosophical tools of the pagan Aristotle and the Stoics, from observing the world around it and inferring that how the world was is how God intended it to be. The central purpose of sex, it therefore pronounced, is procreation.

Many early churchmen, such as St Augustine, followed St Paul in thinking sex a shameful activity at the best of times - virginity and continence are the highest callings. Certainly any deviation from the procreation end was therefore, well, deviant.



dignity and worth of the individual. Homosexuals, like everyone else, he said, were "made in the image and likeness of God". All the nature vs nurture arguments were superseded. From that basis, an emerging gay theology, along with feminist critiques of the patriarchal institutionalisation of sexuality, is now pressing towards an acceptance that homosexual relations and acts are intrinsically no less valuable than heterosexual ones.

It would be a very cavalier and capricious God who created people a certain way and then instructed them that they were forbidden from fulfilling the potential they have been given," says the Rev Richard Kirker, secretary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. "So why do they then say: 'Yes, you can be members of the Church, but only so long as you shut up, go round with a long face, cringing or deeply depressed.'"

Most churches continue to maintain this distinction between acceptable orientation and unacceptable practice - except for the Church of England, which goes one step further by saying that the laity can live in faithful homosexual relationships, but the clergy can't. "To be made gay," says Kirker, "is not automatically to have been given the gift of celibacy."

At this point the arguments of the conservatives turn from theology back to instinctive prejudice. It is only female sexuality that socialises the male, and without it we are left with the rampant irresponsibility of the unmarried fathers of the "underclass", or a gay subculture which is caricatured as seely, promiscuous and hedonistic, without any thought as to whether such characteristics are inevitably those of a group unable to live openly and therefore driven underground.

The old joke is pertinent here. Q: What do homosexuals do in bed? A: Eat biscuits and listen to Radio 4 mainly, like everyone else.

There is still an obsession among many traditionalists with the mechanics of homosexual sex, as though genital acts rather than relationships were at the heart of the identity of a person whose sexuality is not heterosexual.

It did not seem a statement of marked liberalism. But the formidable intellectual armoury of the Vatican was brought to bear on the issue with remorseless logic. In 1986, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the ultra-conservative watchdog of the Church's doctrinal orthodoxy, pronounced that what is inherent is morally neutral: homosexual orientation, therefore, was blameless; only acting on it was blameworthy. His pronouncement was entitled "On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons".

It was a dramatic development. In Catholic moral theology, "person" is a term that constitutes a profound moral statement about the humanity,

shows that they accept that the majority of their sexual acts are not about procreation but must be judged by criteria of love and the bonding of mutual pleasure. Even the Vatican has moved substantially. In 1975, Rome made a distinction between two kinds of same-sex acts. Some were due to a lack of normal sexual development, or were freely chosen through bad example. But others, it said, were victims of a pathological constitution which was incurable.

After Freud, sexuality came to be seen as a profound stratum of the personality, not merely a genital activity. More recently, empirical scientific research has suggested that either some people are born homosexual, or at the very least, their basic sexual orientation becomes relatively fixed in early childhood, usually before the age of seven, without any conscious choice on the individual's behalf.

Even the Catholic Church has caught up. Ordinary Catholics have set the pace by ignoring their church's teaching on contraception - their behaviour

shows that they accept that the majority of their sexual acts are not about procreation but must be judged by criteria of love and the bonding of mutual pleasure. Even the Vatican has moved substantially. In 1975, Rome made a distinction between two kinds of same-sex acts. Some were due to a lack of normal sexual development, or were freely chosen through bad example. But others, it said, were victims of a pathological constitution which was incurable.

It is a field in which work is only beginning. Yet if it bears fruit, the Church may be forced gratefully to acknowledge that though homosexuality - like celibacy - is self-evidently not right for everyone, it is a good job that someone is blessed with it.

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Miles Kingston

Every Monday morning there is a programme on Radio 4 called *Start the Week*, which most of you miss because you have been at work for two hours or are still in bed, so I have programmed the mighty computer here at *The Independent* to produce a representative sample of the programme, compressed from one hour into three minutes. Any time you feel deprived of *Start the Week*, just pull this out of your wallet and read it to yourself. Bragg: Hello. Plenty to talk about this week, as we have with us in the studio a

geneticist, sadly not Steve Jones, but Professor Brian Bingham, who has written a new book called *Programmed for the Millennium*. We have Roger Graft, whose 43-part TV programme *A History of Peace* starts on BBC1 on Monday. We have Melina Vassentype, who is giving a lecture somewhere tomorrow on "The Potato as a Feminist Issue", and Jonathan Miller, who is in a cab somewhere between here and Ealing. We also have Rubella Hastings from *The Guardian*. Professor Bingham, it's always nice to have a scientist on the programme... Bingham: Why is it? Bragg: Well, because as an arts chap who has always been over-obsessed with dead writers, I became aware in mid-life that I knew nothing about science, which has had such an effect on our century, and as it was too late to learn much in a meaningful way about science, I thought I could at least invite a few scientists on this programme and hope a bit would rub off. Bingham: Then why not say so? Bragg: I have said so.

Bingham: Only because I forced it out of you. To begin with you said, "It is always nice to have a scientist on the programme", which is one of these untested pseudo-scientific theories which a real scientist abhors. Bragg: What a load of tosh. Bingham: And there's another. Bragg: So, Professor Bingham, I have read your book and I think it's wonderful. What's it about? Bingham: Can't you guess? Bragg: Yes. I've read it. I just want you to tell the listeners what it's about. Bingham: Then why not say so? Bragg: Tell the listeners what it is about. Bingham: In my book *Programmed for the Millennium*, I have put forward the theory that time has a great deal more effect on us than anyone has suspected. We always decry the habit of carving history up into decades, as it seems quite arbitrary, but I think that the human mind reacts to the end of a decade and draws a mental line before going on to a new chapter. Decades are different from each other. Centuries do have a different

flavour from each other. Bragg: That's fascinating. Can you give us an example? Bingham: SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING. ENTER DR JONATHAN MILLER. Miller: Anyone got £20 for a cab? We came through Harlesden by mistake. Gosh, thanks. DOOR SLAMS. Bragg: I know everyone is dying to get in here. Melina? Vassentype: I have always found time fascinating. I find it fascinating that a Briton and an Australian can have a concept of last Thursday even though they refer to totally different times. We are asleep when Aussies are awake and vice versa, so in a real sense we don't share experience time at all. Bragg: Is that the sort of thing you mean, Professor? Bingham: No. Bragg: Graft? Graft: Time-wise, I am fascinated by the way you expect everyone to discuss life and death issues at 9am on Monday and for people out there to digest it all. Bingham: That's a better example. SOUND OF A DOOR RE-OPENING. RE-ENTER JONATHAN MILLER.

Miller: Talking of cognition. Bragg: We weren't talking about cognition. Miller: That's strange. You usually are at 9.28. Bragg: Roger Graft, why a history of peace? What's wrong with war? Graft: There's nothing wrong with war. It makes really good television. But there is more peace than war, always has been, and I am trying to get us to look at history in terms of peace. We love war, so we talk about the Great War, the 14-18 War. But why don't we talk about the Great 1918-1939 Peace? Bragg: With respect, Professor, that's my line on this show. Rubella? Hastings: Hi. Bragg: Hi. Now, Melina, why the potato and feminism? Vassentype: Why not? Bragg: Jonathan, do you want to come in on this one? Miller: Which one? Bragg: Well, we could go on talking about this all day but sadly we haven't got time. Next week it's a physicist, a historian, a friend of mine who has made a TV series and Taramsalata Dryden from *The Observer*. Goodbye.

Welcome to the war of the working week

Get ready for the next Euro row. It will concern how many hours we may work each week and what our minimum holiday entitlement must be. The rumour will start tomorrow morning if, as expected, the Government learns that its legal challenge to the 48-hour week directive adopted by the European Council of Ministers in 1993 has failed. Stated baldly, the directive provides for a maximum working week of 48 hours; it sets a minimum of four weeks' annual paid holiday and lays down minimum rest periods and rest breaks.

The dispute goes to the heart of Europe's agony over unemployment. The Anglo-Saxon view is that regulation costs jobs, and the legal limits on working hours and legal holiday entitlements are just such an example. To our European neighbours, on the other hand, the working-time directive appears an unexceptional measure. They have always had such legislation. Every one of the other 14 members of the EU already imposes limits on working time; likewise, all but Italy have legislated for minimum holidays.

Neither Conservative nor Labour governments have ever acted on these matters. British practice has been completely different. On the Continent wages are high, work forces are more skilled and better trained and personal taxation is less onerous, but companies bear heavy social costs and it is difficult and expensive to make people redundant. In contrast, our labour markets are characterised by low wages, skills improving from a low base, long hours and light regulation.

Until the mid-1980s the Continental system paid off in terms of success in world markets, employment and standard of living. No longer. In Germany and France unemployment is at record levels and still rising, while our trend has been downwards for some time. The Anglo-Saxon model is now the more successful.

Entwined in the economic argument, however, is a dispute about the UK's legal obligations. The fact is that the origin of the working-time directive is the Single European Act, signed by Mrs Thatcher, which paved the way for the Single Market. Member states agreed to encourage improvements in the health and safety of workers and to harmonise such regulations. The British government had no alternative but to sit down and negotiate the directive with its partners.

In this dispute it is crucial to understand that major changes to the original draft were secured. Qualifications, let-outs, derogations written into the directive, have largely taken the sting out of it. Member states may choose not to apply the family members of family businesses, or to the self-employed. In addition, industries exempted from many of the provisions include sectors where there is a need for continuous working, from hospitals



Andreas Whittam-Smith

All the other EU states already impose limits on working time

isolation itself, and custom and practice, have varied according to the nature of individual industries. Hours of work are controlled for safety reasons in industries such as transport. The British approach has been ad hoc. But generally speaking, shorter hours have been seen as an alternative to higher wages and as a measure for sharing work. No compelling evidence has been 'pleaded' to show that shortening hours of work below their present levels would significantly reduce health and safety risks.

Faced with losing the case, the Government is preparing to turn to a third stratagem. As it did in the BSE crisis, albeit unsuccessfully, it will use our veto on other matters to attempt to force our partners into giving us a special opt-out from the working-time directive. Mr Major claims to have received a sympathetic hearing from the French president, Mr Chirac. In any case, most of the Cabinet believes that anti-Europe campaigns win votes.

This is likely to be worthwhile rather than counter-productive only if the directive as it now stands would reduce employment. The longest hours are worked in mining and quarrying, agriculture, forestry and fishing, followed by transport and communications. Managers, people in professional occupations and plant operatives also put in long hours. Between 30 and 45 per cent of workers in these categories clock up more than 48 hours a week. But few of these examples would be affected by the directive. Neither the Confederation of British Industry nor the Engineering Employers' Federation are making a big song and dance. As they are not, I don't believe the British government should do so. In a way, it has already won.

to electricity production, and industries with seasonal peaks of activity such as agriculture, tourism and postal services. More sweeping, the directive also gives individual countries the right not to apply the provisions of the 48-hour week, provided that individual workers agree and that refusal is not subject to pressure. And the entitlement to four weeks' paid holiday per year need not be introduced straight away. As a result, when the revised draft was put to the European Council of Ministers in November 1993, the British government did not vote against the measure: it abstained.

But it found another way of attacking the directive. It argued that the measure had been brought forward under an inappropriate article of the Treaty of Rome; it was not a health and safety measure where a majority vote could carry the day but a matter of employment rights, where unanimity is required. This is the basis of the Government's appeal to the European court of Justice, whose judgment will be handed down tomorrow.

Of course the UK has had health and safety regulations since Victorian times, and has regularly updated them. Legislation itself, and custom and practice, have varied according to the nature of individual industries. Hours of work are controlled for safety reasons in industries such as transport. The British approach has been ad hoc. But generally speaking, shorter hours have been seen as an alternative to higher wages and as a measure for sharing work. No compelling evidence has been 'pleaded' to show that shortening hours of work below their present levels would significantly reduce health and safety risks.

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A government divorced from reality

by Polly Toynbee



Maybe if George and Martha had seen the 'catchy, interesting, relevant' marriage video, things would have worked out OK

The sound of a herd of moralisers bellowing family values through the Palace of Westminster continues, day after day. When it reached a climax during the debate on the new divorce law the Government promised to Do Something. Last week, finally, it did. But after all that hurumphing and trumpeting, it was a pathetic Something, because in the end, locking people into marriage is not something governments can do.

The Lord Chancellor announced a "major programme to support projects aimed at preventing marriage breakdown". What will it do? "Marriage organisations are being invited to bid for extra funds with ideas for reducing the incidence and cost of marriage breakdown." How much money is in this fund? Something above £250,000 but under £500,000. The marriage-saving quid pro quo for easier divorce turns out to be very few quid indeed. For all the moral sound and fury, the Treasury remained unconvinced that any more money would be well-spent.

Now that 40 per cent of marriages come to an untimely end, a tidal wave of moral panic is engulfing us. But the amount of money the Canute-like Government has just come up with is worth about one sandbag.

Government figures show that divorce costs the Exchequer £4bn a year, mainly in social security and legal aid. The poor are some four times more likely to divorce than rich couples, and it is their divorces that cost the taxpayer.

Since 1948 the government has partly funded marriage guidance, but waiting lists for counselling often stretch to six or eight weeks. The London Marriage Guidance Council is desperately over-stretched, counselling 5,500 couples a year but with a "horrendous" waiting list of 900 couples and a deficit of £150,000.

Bizarrely, the Lord Chancellor said that public lack of knowledge about the service was a problem, and called for schemes to publicise it. Some Relate regions are keen to set up drop-in centres - but that would cost serious money.

There is a great shortage of counsellors, who are highly trained but unpaid volunteers. To recruit many more, they would need to be paid, but by whom? Clients pay according to their means: each session costs £40 but more than half the clients pay far less.

The Lord Chancellor is looking for "innovative schemes", but plainly he wants them cheap, a lot cheaper than counselling. One government idea is an "interactive, multimedia" approach. Would you go into a booth and answer questions about your marriage on a computer screen? Telephone helplines are another proposal, but people would still need to come in for counselling.

The Government is keen on what it calls a "catchy, interesting, relevant video". Darn good fun, telling people in a relevant way about the problems that might arise in marriage. It would be given out free at churches and register offices to people getting married.

This idea comes from Gary Streeter, the minister responsible for the Marriage Task Force - who, incidentally, gained his promotion through a reshuffle following the distinctly non-family values activities of Rod Richards, the married MP caught in *flagrante* and obliged to resign. God works in mysterious ways.

Gary Streeter was converted to Christianity in 1979 at a Charismatic house church. He calls for the church to lead a moral revival. Entering marriage, he says, "should be like William the Conqueror burning his boats [sic] - an irrevocable life commitment".

Talking of his own marriage,

to politically correct that away. But of course a father is crucial, especially for boys who need the presence of a male to develop their personalities. That's the balance of family life. The wisdom of the taxi driver seems to be where the Government draws its philosophy of life.

By coincidence, the very day the Lord Chancellor announced his new marriage initiative, a brilliant new production of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* opened at the Aldwych Theatre in London (left), starring Diana Rigg and David Suchet. It is a raw and bloody slice out of the black heart of marriage. Martha and George, locked together in rage, are on a downward spiral of mutual destruction, drinking themselves into a delirium of marital recrimination and despair. As a portrait of what marriage can become, its truth still shocks.

What would our policy-makers say about George and Martha? I suppose they would hold them up as a model, heroic couple enduring the unendurable. Maybe if George and Martha had seen the proposed "catchy, interesting, relevant" marriage video 20 years ago, things would have worked out OK. Maybe that interactive multimedia computer would fix their problem? We could write a new final scene at the end where the marriage guidance counsellor comes down in a cloud, a *Dea ex machina*.

But what would a good counsellor do? She would step in and prise them apart, telling them that it was time to separate. Just as there is the good marriage, so there is the good divorce. Marriage counsellors have always stressed that their business is not about putting sticking plasters over gangrenous marriages. It is about helping couples to do the right thing and sometimes the right thing is separation. Divorce is not necessarily a disaster. Usually it is a necessity.

People's private lives are not the proper business of politicians and they make asses of themselves when they talk about it. The social problem for politicians is how to reduce the huge cost of divorce to the taxpayer. The Child Support Agency is one solution - if the Government ever dares to track down the resisting fathers and make them pay. Other solutions are equal pay and child care to ensure women can become breadwinners for their families. That, however, lacks the electrifying pizzazz of a good family-values rant.

'Press reports were rather bad: 6,097 killed'

On Armistice Day, one of the last eight survivors of the naval battle of Jutland tells his tale

Now 96 and in very good health, Captain Brian de Courcy-Ireland (right, today, and in 1918) is a veteran of Jutland and the only naval officer alive who witnessed the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet in 1919.

In the early part of 1916 I joined HMS *Bellerophon* as a "wart" [junior midshipman]. On our first day we were given a good sound dozen lashes by the sub-lieutenant, so from day one we knew our place and what would happen if we stepped out of it. I was 15.

On 31 May 1916, we guessed something was up. We knew nothing, we just had a feeling. I was positioned in the 12-inch turrets working the Dumas course and distance calculator. We went into action some time after 5 o'clock. We were kept very busy in the turret and I reckon *Bellerophon* fired about 100 rounds of 12-inch. It was very noisy. At one point we were told we had sunk a German destroyer.

During a lull we came out of the turret to get some fresh air; and there, floating around us, was a whole mass of bodies and debris. Some of our sailors were cheering because they thought they were Germans, but unfortunately they were from HMS *Invincible*. It was a terrible sight and my first experience of death.

For the night action I was on the bridge, which, looking back, was exciting for a young midshipman. We continued firing into the early hours, then disengaged. We didn't really know what had happened until we got back. The press reports of the battle were rather bad: we had lost 6,097 killed: I had lost 13 of my team of 80, one of whom was Anthony Eden's youngest brother. The ship went into a bit of depression for a few days, but we all suffered it together because we got no leave. We simply went back into routine patrols of the North Sea.

I spent my first Christmas Day in the Navy coaling ship, starting at 5.30am and finishing at 5pm. We were



doing sweeps of the North Sea. We got a corned beef sandwich at midday and when it was all over we had to scrub the ship clean.

On 9 July 1917, HMS *Vanguard*, anchored in the next line to us at Scapa Flow, blew up just before midnight. The explosion was terrific: its magazines went up almost simultaneously. Out of 800 men on board there were only two survivors. I was one of those who walked along the beach of Flotta with a bucket, picking up the remains of the men. Kipling refers to us in his poem *The Scholars*.

"They have touched a knowledge-outreaching speech as when the cutters were sent to harvest the dreadful mule of beach after the *Vanguard* went."

On 21 November 1918, ten days after the Armistice, I witnessed the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet at sea. By then I was a lieutenant on HMS *Westcott*. We went out to meet them half-way, fully manned and ready. Everyone was uncertain about what was going to happen.

Out of the mist on that sunny day it really was quite a sight to see them coming towards us. As the German flag was hauled down at sunset to the sound of a bugle, Admiral Beatty was given a round of cheers by all of us in the Grand Fleet. We escorted them to Rosyth and later round to Scapa Flow. Then we spent a lot of time as guard destroyer looking after their destroyers and smaller ships.

That whole period was really rather dicey for us. We weren't allowed to fraternise and we knew their morale was very poor. I remember going slowly past one of their destroyers whose crew, as always, was trying to barter with us to get some food. I saw a sailor go up to an officer and pluck the Iron Cross off his coat and offer it to us for some cigarettes. The officer could do nothing.

On 21 July 1919, we were having a gin before lunch when a sub-lieutenant ran into the wardroom and shouted "The Germans are abandoning ship". We thought at first he was being funny, but we rushed up on deck and indeed they were abandoning ship, every ship. In fact they were scut-

ting them, but there was nothing we could do. Our C-in-C had rather foolishly taken the rest of the Fleet out on exercise and we were the only warship left on duty. We went at full speed towards them to prevent their crews abandoning ship. They took no notice, so we fired a few rounds close to one of them and the whole lot jumped straight over the side! We just stood there and watched this giant cruiser go down in front of our eyes.

The *Hindenburg* looked as if she wasn't going down as fast as the others, so the First Lieutenant, myself and about 20 men got on board her. Before her crew had left they had opened all the watertight doors and done everything needed to sink a ship. She was in a bad state, full of rust, and all power had been disconnected, so we had to work in the dark and close the hatches. We soon realised that she was gradually going down, and as she was sinking, the water pressure just blew the hatches.

We were beginning to feel a shade anxious and scurried up to the bridge. When the water got up to well over the upper deck we began to get pretty worked up and were seriously thinking of jumping over the side. Fortunately she hit the bottom and settled upright. One of our whaling boats came out and picked us off the bridge.

Everywhere we looked we saw mast after mast sticking out from the water. It was an awesome sight. An entire fleet of 71 ships, many of which had fought at Jutland, all scuttled. We were the only warship to witness this extraordinary event.

Eighty years on, I still very much mourn my friends. It is important that we remember their sacrifice and the sacrifice of those who were to follow in the next war.

Captain Brian de Courcy-Ireland spoke to Max Arthur, who is author of *The True Glory of the Royal Navy, 1914-1939*, Hodder and Stoughton, £20.

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Oliver Anderson

Andrew Bond
Oliver Charles Anderson, writer, born Snitterby, Lincolnshire 30 September 1912; died Harlaxton, Lincolnshire 19 October 1996.

John Bauldie

present in his native Bolton as an English lecturer.

I once asked Baudie – during one of the many *longueurs* – happily necessitated by the production of a monthly magazine like *Q* – which, if he were forced to choose, would he give up: Bob Dylan or his beloved Bolton Wanderers. With what I considered at the time to be incoherent haste, he answered simply “Bastie”. It was while returning from watching his team beat Chelsea 2-1 that John Baudie’s irreplaceable life was so cruelly taken.

Bill Prince
John Baudie, journalist and writer: born Bolton, Lancashire 23 August 1949; died 22 October 1996.

George Oslin

George Oslin was the telephone executive who invented the singing telegram.

On 28 July 1933, he organized a Western Union operator named Lucille Lipps to serenade the singer Rudy Vallee on the occasion of his birthday and thus created a durable and surprising form of communication. The idea of a time-developing into the stripogram and other cheerful derivations.

Before his death, Oslin recalled that as public relations director for Western Union his idea was to persuade people that messages should be sent off the association receiving telegram with bereavement.

At the time, he was informed by his employers that he had

**Births,
Marriages
& Deaths**

DEATHS

MEMORIAL SERVICES
COLCHESTER: A memorial service for Nico Colchester will be held at 11.30am at Southwark Cathedral, London SE1, on Wednesday 15 November 1984, and afterwards at the *Financial Times*, 1 Southwark Bridge, London SE1.

For GAZETTE, please telephone

293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

[illegible]

Margaret, joins the J. M. L. Howard Centre for
the study of the history of the North Atlantic.

Changing of the Guard

Birthdays

Professor Thomas, All Souls, physicist, p. 15; Mrs Bilit Anderson, actress, p. 16; Jane Barker, finance director, London Stock Exchange, 47; Lord Carr of Hadley, former Home Secretary, 48; Rear-Admiral Sir Nigel Bland, 49; Sir John Gielgud, 50; Sir John Sheffields, 52; Mr Jonathan Enby, Editor, *South Coast Morning Post*, 54; Mr Ray Frederick, cricket and politician, 54; Mr Ron Greenwood, former football manager, 55; Sir John Gielgud, 56; Hall, deputy chairman, GEC-Marconi, 56; Sir Martin Jacobson, Chairman, British Council, 57; Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, Chancellor of Oxford University, 56; Sir Harold Kent QC, Secretary to the Dean of the Guild, 57; Mr Rodney May QC, 58; Lordy Marsh, cricketer, 58; Mr Derek Milton, former High Commissioner to Jamaica and ambassador to Haiti, 59; Dr Indraprastha Patel, economist, 72; Professor Colin Platt, medical historian, 62; Mr Terence, 60; Mr AJP, 61; Mr Richard Bland, 62; Sir John Gielgud, 63; John Sheffields, former chairman, Novartis, 63; Sir Peter Shepherd, architect, 63; Mr Kurt Vonnegut, novelist, 64; General Sir Walter Walker, former Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces, Northern Europe, 64; Mrs June Whitfield, actress, 71; Lord Bland, former chairman, Wolfson Endowment, 71.

FOUNDING OF

Anniversaries

Antoine de Bougainville, navigator.

179: Johann Kaspar Lavater, founder of physiognomics, 1741;
 180: Mikhail Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, 1821;
 181: Peter Paul Rubens, 1676;
 182: Jean-Edmond Villard, painter, 1808; René Clair (Chomette), film director, 1898; *Deutsches Jahrbuch* (Zürcher), painter, 1898;
 183: Friedrich Schlegel, philosopher, 1797;
 184: Edward German (Edward German Jones), composer, 1870;
 185: Jerome David Kern, composer, 1895;
 186: Alan Patrick Davis, composer, 1912;
 187: Connolly, author and critic, 1947;
 188: James Hanley, novelist and playwright, 1875;
 189: Vsevolod Mikhailovich Molotov (Stribanik), Russian leader, 1869;
 190: Edmund Andrews, 1894;
 191: The two-minute silence was signed between the Allies and Germany, 1918; the two-minute silence for the dead of the First World War was first observed, 1919; the Cenotaph in Whitehall was unveiled, 1920; the first World War was over, 1918;
 192: William B. Whittier, Beverly Hills, California, 1952; Ian Smith made a unilateral declaration of independence for Rhodesia, 1965;
 193: Today is the Feast Day of St Bartholomew of Great Britain;
 194: Monks of Egypt, St Martin of Tours

and St Theodore!

Lectures
Victoria and Albert Museum: Adele Elliott, "Collage and Montage". 2.30pm.
Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Madeleine Bunting, "The Media and Religion". 5.30pm.

The following notes of indi-

The following notes or judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Law Reports*:

REPORT.

Children
Re C (a minor) (Local authority: assessment: CA) (Butler-Sloss, Waite, Roch LJJ) 30 Sept 1996.
A court making an interim care order in favour of the local authority had power under s 28(6) of the Children Act 1989 to give a variety of directions as to the medical, psychiatric or other assessment of the child. Regrettably, that power fell short of enabling the court to direct the authority to seek to direct the parents' wish to both they and the child be placed at a residential assessment centre pending the hearing of final care proceedings. It was particularly unfortunate for these very young parents as the fostering alternative favoured by the authority effectively removed their only chance of obtaining a final order in their favour.
A.A. Rumbleton QC, A.P. Hayden, Gillian Evans (for: Nicholas Lees & Riches, Oxford), Tempelton Taylor Chadwick, Muldoon (for: parents: Lesley, Norman) (Booked at Middlesex: Lefsky, for the guardian ad litem, from France: Hayhurst & Andrew & Liffers, for the local authority).

Insurance

Somlento Bank Ltd v Baqueac *Brussels Lambert S.A. QBD (Comm Ct) (Langley J) 2 Oct 1996.*

The plaintiff banks, which lent money secured by mortgage with the benefit of mortgage indemnity insurance, were not under a duty of disclosure to the insurers. The extent of the duty of disclosure was defined in the policies and was expressed to be the duty of the insured. The banks were not the insured because they had appointed the defendant underwriter as their agent. Therefore the duty of disclosure, as defined in the policies, was placed with the defendant alone as the insured, and the defendant had to take reasonable care in fulfilling that duty and was liable for any failure to do so.

Garn Kealey QC, David Edwards (Clerk of Court) for the plaintiff; Peter Seccombe QC for the defendant.

Liquidator

Ward v Aitken & ors: Re Onells Merchandising Services Ltd; A Peter Gibbons, Otters, Hutchinson Ltd; A Peter Gibbons *QBD (Chancery) 9 Oct 1996.*

A liquidator's right, under s 214

1

CASE SUMMARIES

11 November 1996

2

Insurance
Sunamonte Bank Ltd v Banque Bruxelles Lambert SA; QBD (Comm Ct)
[1996] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 996.

The plaintiff bank, which lent money secured by mortgage with the benefit of mortgage indemnity insurance, were not under a duty of disclosure to the insurers. The extent of the duty of disclosure was defined in the policies and was expressed to be the duty of the insured. The banks were not appointed the defendant underwriter as their agent. Therefore the duty of disclosure, as defined in the policies, was placed with the defendant alone as the insured, and the defendant had to take reasonable care in fulfilling that duty and was liable for any failure to do so.

Gurm Kealey QC, David Edwards (Clerk of Court), for the plaintiffs Peter Seaton QC, David Rathon (Linklaters & Paines) for the defendant.

Liquidator
Ward v Aitken & ors; Re Onzels Merchandising Services Ltd; A Peter Gibson, Others, Hutchinsell Ltd (9 October 1996).

A liquidator's duty, under s 214

1

19

day on which an offence continued as laid down by s 80(5) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, since s 80 did not expressly limit the magistrate's discretion under s 34(1) of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 to impose such a lesser fine.

Gregory Dowell (*Canterbury City Council*) for the appellant; the respondents did not appear.

Sentencing

R v Hodgson; CA (Cr Div) (Bingham LCJ, Beldford, Cresswell JJ) 17 Oct 1996.

Section 44 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, which gave the court additional control over sexual offenders, affected both the period which the offender would serve if released on licence and the period for which he would continue to be supervised after release on licence. In making an order the court's primary considerations were the need to protect the public from serious harm and the desirability of preventing offenders committing further offences and securing their rehabilitation.

Nicholas Hillard (CPS) for the

August 1994 *Florida* **1**

Tax
R v Revenue Adjudicator (Office, ex p Drummond); QBD (Turner, J) 6 August 1996.
The Revenue Adjudicator's Office was refused to refuse a taxpayer access to a letter which had about his affairs which had been sent in by an informant. Although the taxpayer's affairs had been investigated, it had not been as a result only of the letter but also of other information. The allegations had not only been used to indicate lines of inquiry which were independently pursued. It was necessary that confidential sources of information were protected.
The taxpayer in person; the Revenue did not appear.

CORRECTIONS: In *R v Hunton Fairs Ltd* (1996) 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926

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Allied Domecq searches for a tonic to improve its dismal performance

Shares of Allied Domecq have the dubious distinction of turning in the weakest performance of any of the drink giants. The group could be accused of staggering from one mishap to another, often outmanoeuvred by its major rivals.

The Teacher's Scotch whisky to Beefeater gin group is due to roll out results tomorrow. If they are not disappointing the stock market will be suspicious. It is, however, the accompanying trading statement and any hint new chairman Sir Christopher Hogg gives about Allied's future direction which will capture most attention.

Allied, created in the late 1950s when three leading breweries indulged in a defensive merger to challenge the activities of a Canadian takeover marauder, is in the process, Whitehall permitting, of retiring from the beverage by selling its struggling Carlsberg brewery arm, still the third-largest brewer in the country.

The group, it could be argued, has squandered its once-proud brewing heritage and must now rely on its retailing and spirit operations.

It had been hoped that Sir Christopher would take the view that international spirit brands, a sprawling and diverse chain of pubs, the Dunkin' Donuts outlets, Baskin Robbins ice cream and the Victoria Wine off-licences are not an obvious mix.

If Hanson and Thorn EMI can split disparate businesses, why not Allied? It could join the demerger trend by dividing itself into two stand-alone companies - retailing and spirit production and distribution. Although it became clear at the bottom of the barrel prices during the recession.

There is a feeling the market has not fully appreciated the belated retreat from brewing. It will, sooner or later, free Allied from what is regarded as an onerous price agreement

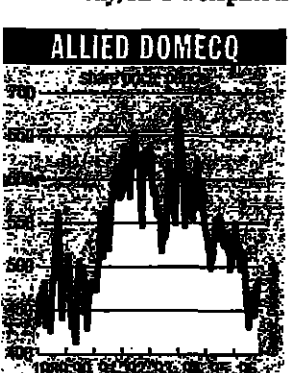
adopt a more focused approach. It would also offer a fresh start, perhaps giving Allied the opportunity to throw off the impression that it is an accident-prone group.

Its catalogue of woes include a £147m loss in a foreign exchange fiasco, splashing out around £700m for the Pedro Domecq brandy and sherry business just before its major market, Mexico, went in sharp decline, and selling off its food division at mostly disappointing prices. It could also be argued it mistimed its departure from brewing. If it had followed the Greenalls example and quit before the Beer Orders were enforced, it would have avoided having to sell pubs at bottom-of-the-barrel prices during the recession.

There is a feeling the market has not fully appreciated the belated retreat from brewing. It will, sooner or later, free Allied from what is regarded as an onerous price agreement



With Carlsberg, Tetley and allow the chain to buy pubs - perhaps mounting a bid for a high-profile retailer.



STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

no stranger to the demerger art. He managed it at Courtaulds, splitting the group into chemical and textile operations.

The two Courtaulds companies have survived as independents. There is, however, a strong belief that Allied's spin-side would quickly fall victim to a takeover bid, probably from Guinness, although Grand Metropolitan could be interested.

Peter Lucas and Nick Williamson at Credit Lyonnais believe Allied's break-up value is around 550p a share against 484.5p on Friday.

Allied is clearly in the last chance saloon. If its performance does not improve it is

likely to fall victim to a takeover bid; possibly a break-up exercise. Tomorrow's year-on-year profits are expected to come out at £560m, before the ravages of exceptional costs. Last year the group produced £645m.

British Steel is another facing a setback. Its interim profits, due today, are likely to reflect the fall in stainless steel prices. Around £250m against £550m is expected. But, here again, figures may be overshadowed. Hopes are running high the group could indulge in a share buyback or, in view of the Government's tax clampdown, a special dividend. British Steel has had a rather dull market existence since it was privatised at 125p a share eight years ago.

Two insurance giants are likely to maintain the lower profits theme. General Accident and Commercial Union are expected to be the casualties of poor underwriting re-

sults. Nine-month figures from General Accident should emerge at around £310m (£350m) and Commercial Union should produce £345m, down from £383m.

BT, with second-quarter profits, is another in retreat. About £680m is the guess against £732m last time. The telephone giant is another where mere figures are overshadowed: in its case by the giant merger with MCI, the US group. Since scoring an early gain on the deal its shares have given ground as it has come under pressure in some quarters over the merits of such an ambitious and costly jump into a highly competitive market.

Societe Generale Strauss Turnbull is a voice raised in support of BT. Analysts John Tysoe and Andrew Moffat say: "The merger shifts the company's focus away from the narrow restrictions of the UK market to the world stage at a time

when the market is embracing the concept of competition for the first time. There is a huge opportunity in the domestic USA as that market prepares for full competition."

BAA, the airports group, flies in with interim figures today. A modest advance to £303m is forecast by NatWest Securities. Still, with its regulatory pricing regime settled for the next five years, a relatively low political risk factor and an increasing flow of income from unregulated operations, it should have an encouraging future.

The group's more aggressive approach was illustrated by its unsuccessful bid for the duty-free operations of Alders, the department store chain. It was outbid by Swissair. There are suggestions it could become more involved with Alpha Airports, where Harrods chief Mohamed Al Fayed last week picked up the 25 per cent interest Granada inherited from Forte and put up for sale.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex rights = Ex-dividend at all United Securities Market 4 suspended; pp: Parity Paid per 100 Paid Shares; \$: All Stocks. Source: FT Information

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Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Prime	Discount	Prime	Discount
Base	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
3-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
6-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
12-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
18-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
24-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
30-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
36-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
42-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
48-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
54-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%
60-month	4.50%	4.50%	5.00%

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business & city

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER



Patrick Ponsolle: Annoyed by share price movements

France asks SFO to investigate Eurotunnel shares

Magnus Grimond

The Serious Fraud Office said yesterday it would investigate alleged insider dealing in Eurotunnel shares following a request by the French authorities to Michael Howard, the home secretary.

Eight or nine of Britain's leading banks and financial institutions are said to be at the centre of the probe, amid claims that insiders are profiting from

privileged information about the Anglo-French Channel tunnel operation.

As well as dealing a further blow to Eurotunnel shares, the controversy looks set to further tarnish the reputation of the City, which is still reeling from scandals involving improper trading at Morgan Grenfell and Robert Fleming.

A spokesman for the SFO, James O'Donoghue, said yesterday: "The Serious Fraud Of-

fice has agreed to investigate, on behalf of the French authorities, allegations of market manipulation in Eurotunnel shares."

But he said Britain's top anti-fraud body would not launch its own investigation. "We do not have grounds to investigate market manipulation on a domestic level. You have to remember that the bulk of shareholders in Eurotunnel are French, and most dealings in Eurotunnel have taken place in

Paris, rather than in London, so it's not surprising that the focus should be over there."

The inquiry, which follows a visit to the UK by French fraud police last week, will be led by Chris Dickson, who heads overseas investigations for the SFO.

Sir Alastair Morton, the former British chairman of the group, and his French opposite

number, Patrick Ponsolle, have complained vociferously and publicly about volatile move-

ments in the share price, which they claim resulted from leaked information and rumours started by market operators. The company welcomed the inquiry.

The SFO denied that it was acting under political pressure in taking on the case, despite its admission that it did not have enough evidence to launch an investigation on its own. It emerged over the weekend that the London Stock Exchange has already looked into dealings in

Eurotunnel shares through its surveillance department and has been unable to substantiate allegations of insider dealing in the London market.

Suggestions that the group's share price was being manipulated date back at least as far as its second rights issue, which raised £850m in 1994. The Comité des Opérations de Bourse, the French equivalent of the Stock Exchange council, began investigations just before that

cash call, but appeared to get nowhere. However, in September the Swiss authorities were brought in and, according to a newspaper report yesterday, the French are pointing the finger at "suspicious operations" involving banks in Geneva and Zurich.

The SFO has wide powers to interview people and recover documentary evidence in the pursuit of an investigation, which does not have to relate to frauds committed within its jurisdiction.

CBI conference: Warning for Eurosceptics as poll of business shows growing support for EMU

Industry says yes to single currency

Michael Harrison and Chris Goddard in Harrogate

Business leaders last night predicted that Europe would move to a single currency in 1999 as a survey showed that industry was backing Britain's participation in economic and monetary union by two to one.

Adair Turner, director general of the Confederation of British Industry, said: "If anything, business is moving in a more European direction."

He was speaking as the CBI published a poll of 1,700 businessmen on the eve of its national conference in Harrogate showing that more than half of firms - 56 per cent - supported EMU in principle while 30 per cent were opposed.

Business leaders were also increasingly in favour of Britain being in the first wave of monetary union. The proportion of firms who thought the pound should enter a single currency in 1999 had gone up from 19 per cent a year ago to 28 per cent now.

Sir Colin Marshall, the CBI's president, said he believed there would be a single currency in 1999 and that Britain should not rule out the option of joining.

"The single market is of vital importance to our future success and while there is still a split in views over EMU there is little enthusiasm for ruling it out as an option," he said. "To reject it now would give us no say as to how the Euro-coin eventually falls."

The business community's broad endorsement of EMU was coupled with a warning to the Government that the Eurosceptic wing of the Tory Party was damaging Britain's economic industry. David Richardson, president of the British Chambers of Commerce, which jointly published the survey, said: "There is a strong view that it is our politicians that are letting us down. The message from business is clear: stop playing games with our future in Europe."

The theme of Europe and the single currency is set to dominate the next two days in Harrogate with the conference culminating in a debate between Eurosceptics and Europhiles, led by the former Cabinet minister John Redwood, debating the issue on Tuesday.

The captains of British industry tested out the country's newly-privatised rail network over the weekend - but found that when it comes to getting there you cannot beat the motor car, writes Michael Harrison.

Adair Turner, director general of the CBI, decided to let the train take the strain as he journeyed up from London to Harrogate on Saturday night for the organisation's annual



Facing up to it: Adair Turner, the CBI director general, shows his Prince's Trust mask at the start of the conference. The masks will be auctioned for charity in London at the end of November. Photograph: John Houlhary/Gazette

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, is expected to move Labour towards a more business stance on Europe when he addresses the conference today. Mr Brown will tell delegates that Labour would oppose any extension of qualified majority voting on Social Chapter legislation. "I can assure you that not only do we have no plans to

extend qualified majority voting in these areas, but we would veto any attempt to do so," he will say.

The CBI/BCC survey, carried out in November by Mori among 5,000 businesses, shows that only 10 per cent of businesses back a single currency outright, believing it essential to ensure the competitiveness of

UK business. However, there is an even smaller minority of just 7 per cent of firms who say that Britain should reject a single currency point blank.

Sir Collin said the results disproved claims that business had become more Eurosceptic over the past year. He also rejected suggestions that the business community was split over EMU,

saying: "Business and industry across the country and across the spectrum from large to small enterprises are in favour of the move to EMU and a single currency."

But he refused to be drawn on whether the CBI would throw its wholehearted support behind Britain's membership of the first phase of EMU. The employers' organisation is to begin a mass consultation exercise among members immediately after the conference with the aim of making a firm recommendation in the middle of next year after the election.

The CBI added that it did not approve of member states fudging the figures in order to qualify for EMU. But it said that while Britain was unlikely to meet the requirement to keep the public deficit to less than 3 per cent of GDP, it was much more important that it met the target of limiting overall debt to 60 per cent of national output.

claim form to Jim Sherwood, whose Sea Containers Group owns Great North Eastern Railways, or Chris Garnett, brother of Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley, who runs the business. But one word of caution.

The privatised rail operators are not obliged to cough up a penny in compensation when the cause of the delay was not their direct fault. Some things never change.

Adair Turner, travelling with his personal assistant, had had enough of the railways. He marched outside the station, jumped into a mini-cab and ordered it to take him the remaining 30 miles to the Moat House Hotel, Harrogate.

The taxi fare was £80, a sum Mr Turner intends to claim back. He can either send the

beano. He had got little more than halfway when he discovered that Railtrack and Great North Eastern Railways - what used to be BR's East Coast Mainline - had other ideas.

His InterCity 125 arrived at Newark station in Nottinghamshire and stayed there for two hours. Passengers were eventually told that vandals had stolen the signalling cable between Newark and Retford.

Taking the train can be a strain

£1.3bn US bid for East Midlands

Chris Goddard
Business Correspondent

Dominion Resources, the US electricity and gas company, is expected to launch a formal £1.3bn takeover bid for East Midlands Electricity this morning.

Last night Dominion's UK advisers, investment bankers SBC Warburg, were believed to be putting together the finishing touches to the offer with their US counterparts, buyout specialists Wasserstein Perella.

The bid will probably value East Midlands shares at between 60p and 65p, giving a price range of £1.25bn to £1.3bn. The shares closed on Friday at 59.5p.

The takeover bid will be the second by a US company for a privatised regional electricity company in the space of two weeks. Northern Electric is fighting a £700m all cash offer from CE Electric, which is ma-



Nigel Rudd: Has not had a formal request for a meeting

jority owned by the American power generator CalEnergy. If both bids are successful, it would leave just three RECs still independent: London, Yorkshire and Southern.

Last week Dominion confirmed it was considering making a bid for East Midlands but would not be prepared to pay much more than 60p a share, valuing the Nottingham-based business at £1.2bn. The final decision on the price will rest with Dominion's board.

East Midlands executives were yesterday evening preparing their response to a bid with advisers from the merchant banking group Schroders.

Despite the fact that Dominion has been eyeing the company since the summer there has been no formal request for a meeting with East Midlands' directors, including the chairman, Nigel Rudd.

An informal approach was made by Dominion last week but until now contacts have been between City advisers. "We will make contact when there's a bid," said a Dominion source. Analysts have suggested

a potential bidder would have to pay around 670p a share, though Mr Rudd is unlikely to recommend any bid at the outset unless it is closer to 700p, representing a price of around £1.4bn. Dominion, with 1.9 million customers and sales last year of \$4.65bn (£2.8bn), is similar in size to East Midlands.

The UK company is widely thought to have been one of the best managed RECs in recent years, having slashed its workforce by almost 40 per cent since privatisation six years ago.

The biggest question mark hangs over the attitude of the regulatory authorities. Fund managers who control most of the shares believe the Government will block both bids on the grounds that they would leave too few stock market-quoted RECs to use for efficiency comparisons. The growing uncertainty has hit the share prices of East Midlands and Northern.

ITN to sign cut-price contract with ITV

Matthew Horsman

ITN, which makes news programmes for ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5, will finally reach agreement this week on the controversial renewal of its key contract to supply ITV.

The contract, to run for five years, will be pitched at just under £42m in the first year, down from £57m a year currently, and will be linked to the rate of inflation.

The contract, which had been expected to be signed last month, was held up by a number of disagreements, most recently over the use of regional news pictures produced by ITV companies. ITN, best known for its *News at Ten* programme, was eager for the right to use news-worthy material even before it ran on regional networks.

According to sources at ITV and ITN, agreement was with-

in reach late last week. The contract puts an end to several years of uncertainty for ITN, which had been dogged by ownership questions and a putative bid by Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB to wrest the ITV contract away.

Under the terms of the Broadcasting Act, no single company can own more than 20 per cent of a "nominated news supplier," of which ITN is the only one. Following the takeovers of Central Television and LWT by Carlton and Granada respectively, the two ITV giants ended up with 36 per cent each of ITN.

Carlton and Granada agreed to sell their excess stakes to Lord Hollick's United News & Media and Daily Mail & General Trust, in a deal that valued ITN at about £99m. The price of the agreement was a lower per-year price for the main ITV news supply contract.

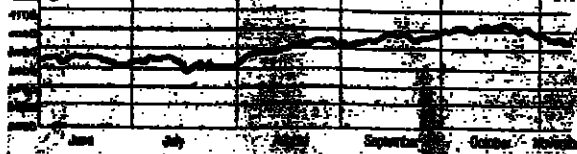
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STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
									
Indices							1996 52-Week Highs		
Index	Close	Week's chg	Change(%)	1996 High	1996 Low	Vol(%)			
FTSE 100	3910.80	-37.7	-1.0	4073.10	3632.30	4.03			
FTSE 250	4335.60	-33.6	-0.8	4568.60	4015.30	3.55			
FTSE 350	1953.40	-18.0	-0.9	2022.10	1816.60	3.93			
FTSE SmallCap	2158.84	-8.6	-0.4	2244.95	1954.05	3.15			
FTSE All-Share	1929.51	-17.0	-0.9	1994.54	1791.05	3.67			
New York	6219.83	+197.9	+3.3	6219.83	5932.94	2.15			
Tokyo	21201.04	+688.0	+2.8	22866.80	19734.70	0.77			
Hong Kong	12751.16	+221.9	+1.8	12775.47	10204.67	3.28			
Frankfurt	2739.83	+56.6	+2.1	2739.83	2253.36	1.72			

Source: FT Information

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year
UK	6.06	5.81	5.77	5.78	US	5.28	5.58	5.78	5.93
US	5.28	5.58	5.77	5.78	Japan	0.44	0.59	0.71	0.83
Japan	0.44	0.59	0.71	0.83	Germany	3.06	3.25	3.42	3.58
Germany	3.06	3.25	3.42	3.58					

CURRENCIES

S/£

Index	Close	Week's chg	Tr. Yr
\$ (London)	1.6447	-0.20c	1.5765
\$ (N York)	1.6480	+0.10c	1.5765
DM (London)	2.4750	-0.15m	2.2248
¥ (London)	163.480	-0.572	169.333
₹ (India)	90.5	-0.1	83.3

\$/DM

Index	Close	Week's chg	Tr. Yr
£ (London)	0.6080	+0.07	0.6043
£ (N York)	0.6098	+0.04	0.6043
DM (London)	1.5059	-0.19m	1.4123
¥ (London)	111.550	-0.215	190.700
₹ (India)	96.2	unch	93.8

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Week's chg	Tr. Yr
Oil Brent \$	22.53	-0.21	16.62
Gold \$	378.90	-1.55	389.85
Gold £	230.38	-0.66	246.04

Index	Index	Index	Index
RPI	153.8	+2.12m	150.8
GDP	108.9	+2.30m	105.7
Base Rates	—	6.00pc	6.75

14 Nov

Jan 27

—

MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Rises - Top 5				Falls - Top 5					
Items	Price (p)	Wk's Chg (p)	% Chng	Items	Price (p)	Wk's Chg (p)	% Chng		
Northern Ireland Elec	357.5	32	9.8	Senior Engineering	114.5	10.5	8.4		
East Midlands Elec	593.5	49	9.0	British Sky Broadc	522	47	8.3		
National Power	433.5	28.5	7.0	Cookson Group	208.5	18	7.9		

OTHER INDICATORS									
	Class	Week's chg	Year Ago		Index	Latest Yr Ago	Next Yr		
Oil Brent \$	22.53	-0.21	16.62	RPI	153.8	+2.12pc	150.8	14 Nov	
Gold \$	378.90	-1.55	388.85	GDP	108.9	+2.8pc	106.7	Jan 27	
Gold £	230.38	-0.66	246.84	Base Rates	—	6.00pc	6.75		

What should we do about the soaring pound?

GAVYN D.

'Up to now, actually, inflation has been considerably boosted by the drop in sterling, which happened last year, but the effect is about to turn the other way'

literary jargon, economists often refer to the "first best". Unfortunately, economic policy is entering a world for the first time in at least 10 years where the rise in the sterling exchange rate, and by the fact that it is impossible to get back into the world by tightening fiscal policy. This would be the best way to pound down. Most people's belief, tighter policy generally keeps exchange rates low. If, however, the exchange rate is high, it encourages markets to expect higher interest rates, and the market will fear a consumer price index rise, and the market will hit higher. This in turn will hit the market, and further unbalance the market, which is already biased towards away from manufacturing, and best world, the key difficulty is to ignore the behaviour of the exchange rate and raise base rates further in coming months.

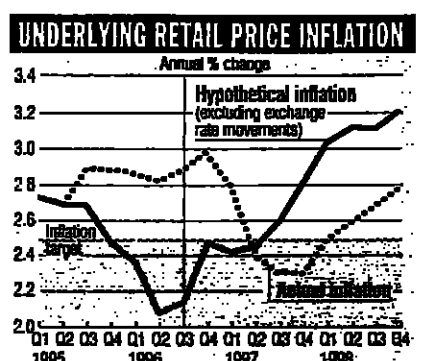
To the Bank's opponents, this is another example of how Threadneedle Street always errs on the hawkish side of any debate about monetary policy. But the Bank claims it is in fact being completely symmetrical in its approach. The reason why the inflation forecast has not been brought down this quarter as sterling has risen is that domestic inflationary forces have worsened considerably since the August Report. These do-

estic forces have added at least 0.7 per cent to the underlying inflation rate in the current quarter, and this is more than enough to swamp any permanent beneficial effects from a higher exchange rate. Hence further base rate rises are needed.

The Bank believes that three factors may have been responsible for the recent rise in sterling. The first is a rise in the "equilibrium real exchange rate", largely driven by rising oil prices. This explains about half of the total rise in sterling. The second factor is a loosening in monetary conditions overseas, which explains a quarter of the rise. The third is an expected tightening in domestic monetary conditions (ie a market expectation that base rates will rise in future), and that too explains about a quarter of sterling's gain. According to the Bank, only the last

of these factors will lead to a permanent drop in inflation, and that will only happen if the expected rise in base rates is actually delivered by the authorities, along the path which is currently anticipated by the financial markets. The upshot of this analysis is that the need for base rate increases has not been eliminated by the rise in sterling.

This approach stands in sharp contrast to the view of some other central banks, notably the Bank of Canada. The latter explicitly takes account of exchange rate movements when setting domestic interest rates, and has actually formalised the process by calculating a monetary conditions index, in which a 1 per cent point change in interest rates is given the same weight as a 3 per cent change in the exchange rate. This procedure, of course, makes no sense if behaviour of the exchange rate is indeed primarily determined by the level of interest rates at home and abroad, but it would make more sense if the exchange rate is subject to "exogenous" shocks which are unrelated to other economic fundamentals.



If, for example, the recent rise in sterling could be attributed to a sustained drop in the risk premium on UK assets, or even to a self-fulfilling fad in the foreign exchange markets, then it might make more sense to treat it as a substitute for further increases in base rates. So far, it is difficult to argue that this is the case. But it seems quite likely that the strength of sterling will go further in coming months, since the UK is the only major country which is growing rapidly at present, and this is acting as a magnet for speculative

capital inflows. With countries such as Japan and Switzerland holding their interest rates at exceptionally low levels, this force will not quickly disappear and could easily gather momentum. It could add up to quite an economic shock, and could certainly have a powerful short-term effect on inflation.

The graph, prepared by David Walton of Goldman Sachs, shows what might have happened to inflation if the exchange rate had remained unchanged at the level reached at the end of 1994. Up to now, actual inflation has been considerably boosted by the drop in sterling which happened last year, but the effect is about to turn the other way, and from the early part of next year the path for inflation will be sharply held down by exchange rate effects. For a time, this may be enough to keep inflation below the Government's target, but the target is still likely to be exceeded before the end of next year, and the main trend is probably now upwards.

This inflation profile supports the Bank's case for base rates to rise further, unless there is a really marked additional rise in sterling from present levels. If that occurs, then the policy choices will not be envious ones. Base rate rises could cause the pound to overshoot upwards, but their absence could result in a rampant consumer boom.

As the Bank hints, the route back to the first best world would be for the Chancellor to slow domestic demand by tightening fiscal policy in the Budget. But, in this pre-election period, the Bank might as well be asking for the moon.

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Job insecurity has increased during the 1990s, contrary to Government claims that there is little evidence to support the phenomenon, according to a report published today.

The main reason for a growing sense of insecurity has been not so much a drop in the average length of time people manage to hold a job as the rising costs of job loss. As ministers have suggested, there has

ie rising cost of losing a job adds to insecurity

a decline in the tenure - it has actually risen since the mid-1980s. In fact, the costs of being unemployed have risen. They include longer unemployment, levels of benefits relative to wages, and the lower wage people can expect to earn if they are re-employed. In

addition, a smaller proportion of the workforce is covered by employment protection legislation than 20 years ago, although this coverage has improved during the past decade.

The evidence, published by the independent Employment Policy Institute, shows that there is some justification for the widespread sense of insecurity revealed by opinion polls.

The report, written by economists Paul Gregg and Jonathan Wadsworth at the London School of Economics, identifies three potential causes of insecurity: shorter job tenure, weaker job protection, and increased costs of unemployment.

The average length of time in a job fell from 6 years 1 month

in 1975 to 4 years 5 months in 1990, and has climbed back to 5 years 6 months since then. Job tenure for men, especially the over-50s, fell steadily until 1990 before stabilising. For women it was flat but has increased steadily since 1990, mainly because maternity leave allows mothers to return to the same job.

However, not only has the decrease in average tenure been modest, it also tends to fall when the economy is doing well because more people switch jobs voluntarily.

More significant, the authors argue, has been the rise in the cost of job loss.

People spend 20 per cent longer in unemployment com-

pared to the mid-1970s, although there has been little change during the past 10 years. The value of benefits received has fallen relative to the average wage.

But the biggest cost is the fact that the wages accepted by somebody taking a job after a spell of unemployment are typically lower than in the job

they lost. This gap has increased over time. Only just over a quarter of "entry" jobs are full time and permanent, and the typical weekly wage for somebody re-entering work is £100 a week.

The report concludes: "It is easier and probably more sensible to try and reduce the costs associated with job loss rather than to stop job losses."

"Unfortunately, over the past 20 years for many people these costs appear to have risen rapidly."

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Bees could put the sting back into pesticides

The natural immunisation of pests against chemicals has been unravelled, reports **Bernard Dixon**

There is nothing new about treating a human or other animal with a chemical to eradicate a harmful microbe from the body; it happens whenever a doctor prescribes an antibiotic to combat an infection. But scientists in India have achieved almost the opposite. They have protected bees against a chemical – an insecticide – by inoculating them with bacteria that break it down. Their discovery, the first report of the use of microbes to decontaminate a living creature, may have important applications in agriculture.

Microbes have a remarkable capacity to attack otherwise toxic chemicals, a fact already exploited in environmental cleansing. Biotechnologists have rendered several contaminated sites safe, either by introducing bacteria into the soil to break down pollutants or by stimulating the growth and activity of those already there. An example is the abandoned Greenbank gas works, near Blackburn.

In at least one very different context, microbes capable of attacking chemicals are less beneficial. Bacteria are suspected of being responsible for providing disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes with resistance to the pesticides sprayed on breeding grounds. In some cases the insects acquire the capacity themselves, through mutation, to withstand insecticides or to produce enzymes that break them down. But bacteria on or inside insects also appear to play a significant role. One report showed micro-organisms living on the surface of blowflies were capable of destroying the pesticide dieldrin.

With this in mind, ID Sharma and colleagues at the Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry in Solan, India, investigated further. Their first step was to discover that certain honey bees became vulnerable to the insecticide carbaryl when treated with antibiotics. Were the bees normally unaffected by carbaryl because they harboured bacteria that normally rendered the pesticide harmless? And did the antibiotics make the bees susceptible to carbaryl by killing these protective bacteria?

As reported in this month's *Journal of Applied Bacteriology*,



Bacteria may be helping mosquitoes resist pesticides

both suppositions proved correct. First, the researchers studied honey bees already known to be resistant to carbaryl. They found that they contained at least three types of bacteria which, when transferred to laboratory glassware and grown in the presence of carbaryl, broke down the insecticide. One was *Enterobacter aerogenes*, another was a species of *Citrobacter*, and the third could not be identified. All were dedicated degraders of carbaryl, able to grow on it by using it as their sole source of energy and carbon.

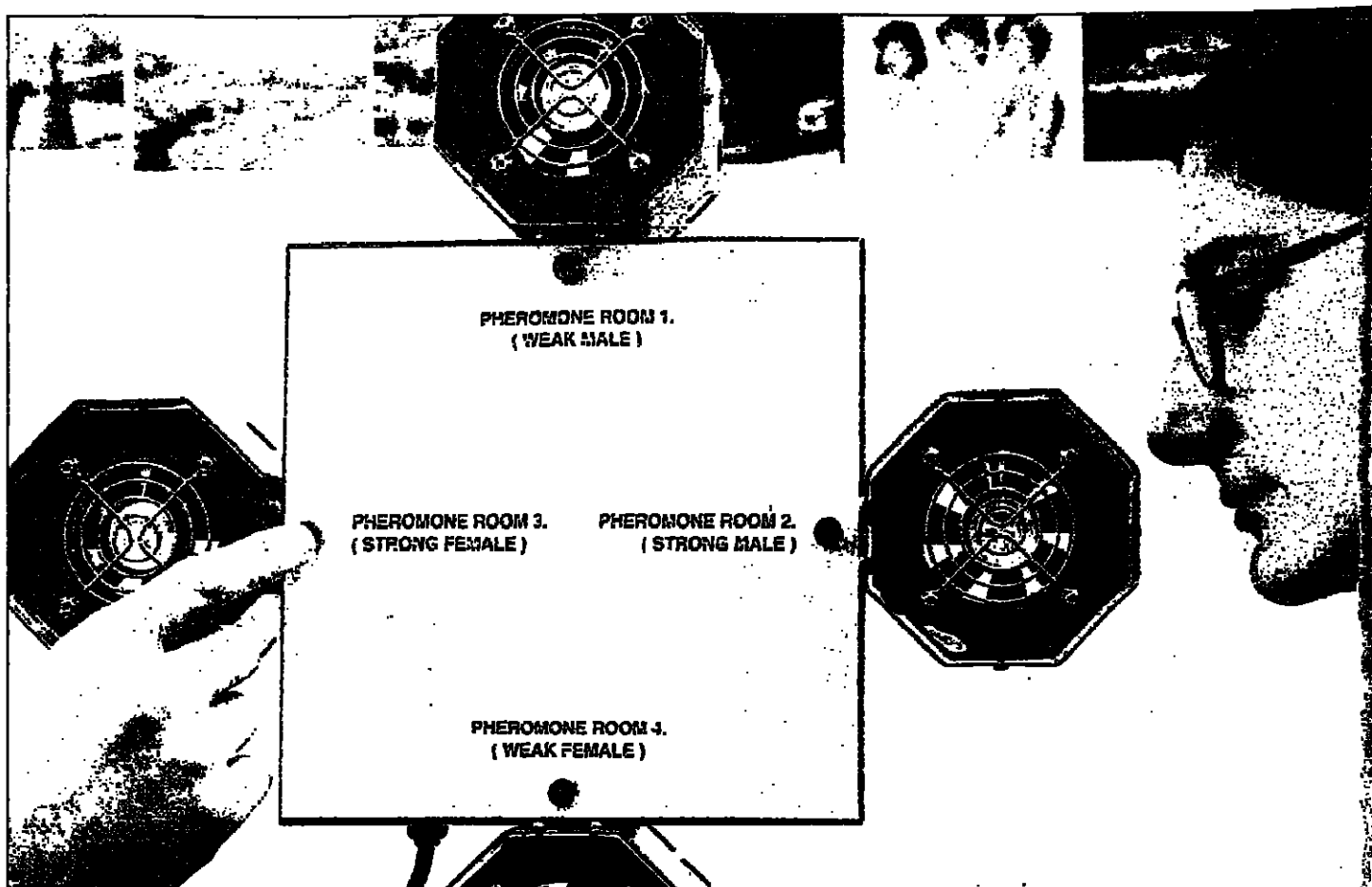
In a second set of experiments, the researchers set out to find out what concentration of the antibiotic streptomycin would destroy the bacteria inside the bees without harming the bees themselves. The tests established that, as the bacteria were killed, so the bees became vulnerable to the insecticide. The compelling conclusion from the two sets of results was that normally the microbes were indeed protecting the bees against carbaryl.

Microbe of the Month

A third group of experiments put the matter beyond question, and suggested applications of the discovery. Sharma and his colleagues grew pure cultures of the *Citrobacter* species, *Enterobacter aerogenes* and the unidentified organism in the laboratory and then inoculated them into other bees to see whether this enhanced whatever capacity they had to withstand the insecticide. In every case, introduction of the bacteria greatly increased the bees' tolerance towards carbaryl. Each of the microbes was effective, but the highest degree of protection came when the three were introduced together. This indicates that they act in concert to promote the most efficient breakdown of the insecticide and thus render the bees insensitive to its ill effects.

One possible application of these findings is in situations where crops require pollination, yet the blossom has to be treated with an insecticide to prevent insect attack. In this case, bees inoculated with strains of bacteria designed to boost their resistance to the relevant pesticide could be used to ensure pollination.

The obvious risk with an approach of this sort is that the bacteria might be transferred from beneficial bees to destructive pests, enhancing their resistance to pesticides. But Sharma believes this danger could be sidestepped by modifying the microbes so they fulfil their protective role in bees but fail to grow and thus become established in other insects.



Heaven scent: Clara Ursutti's ICA installation Pheromone Link is a nasal dating agency with the slogan 'Love is in the air – just follow you'

On the scent of love

Pheromones, the chemicals that produce a person's unique sexual 'signature', can be used to sniff out the perfect partner, or create olfactory artworks. **John Windsor** reports

I was the smelliest artwork on display at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Part of the Toshiba Art and Innovation show was a push-button blower dispensing four different examples of human body odour. Interactive, too – there were cotton armpit pads to collect samples of one's own smell, T-shirts (or rather, sweatshirts), and a pile of questionnaires.

The complete kit amounted to the first dating agency to attempt to match partners by their smell. It is called Pheromone Link, and the artist, 28-year-old Clara Ursutti, a graduate of the Glasgow School of Art, plans to advertise it in newspapers and magazines. Volunteers will receive a welcome letter that says: "Love is in the air – just follow your nose!"

Pheromones are biochemicals that signal our sexuality to others. Everyone has a unique pheromone signature; ask any police dog. If you want to question whether Pheromone Link is art or science, ponder this: we may not know much about pheromones, but we know what we like.

The four odours on offer at the ICA – two male, two female – smelled neither human nor alluring to me. But perceived faintly across a crowded room, any one of them might have had a galvanic effect. Nor could I tell them apart, except for the pungent "strong male". Ms Ursutti was reassuring: "You can state your sexual preference on the questionnaire," she said.

Her other olfactory artworks, "self-portraits in scent", have been wafted electronically inside an airtight booth at an art exhibition in Glasgow and distributed on bits of blotting paper in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and at last year's Venice Biennale, where they were available from vending machines. "I'm not arrogant enough to think I can come up with an aesthetic of smell," she says. "But smell

does seem to me to be the fallen angel of the senses – and of the arts. My interest in it is an extension of my interest in the body, a common theme in art. I challenge the self-portrait is something strictly visual."

Behind the arts scenes lurks a scientist – Dr George Dodd, 54, the father of the psychology of perfumery. Until two years ago, he was the only trained perfumer with a university post. He lectured in chemistry at the University of Warwick and directed its Institute of Olfactory Research.

"Perfumery is a craft, something of an artistic activity, so I find it easy to work with Clara," he says. "There is art in the visual system and for the auditory system. Why not for the olfactory system, too?"

He is now setting up a natural healing centre in a modern croft house on 10 acres of land on the shore of Loch Ewe in the Western Isles of Scotland, where he can look out over the Atlantic and a colony of shags. His is the world's only laboratory for sensitivity to smell. The Scottish Office has granted him £60,000 to develop a clinical test, the olfactory equivalent of an eye test, which could help to diagnose disease.

Dr Dodd has chemically identified and synthesised all the human pheromones. He reckons that Pheromone Link could match dating partners by asking them to express preferences for 12 different families of synthetic human pheromones, sent by post on tear-off small strips. That way, in a few moves, I could find out what odour note appeals to you," he explained. "The sexually compatible enjoy

each other's body odour. There's an odour conversation between them. That is what is meant by 'sexual chemistry'. But before now it has never been worked out scientifically."

Some people, he says, have clear and unambiguous smell preferences. But to help identify body odours that couples can agree they like, he will also use not only his own trained nose and those of a panel of experts, but the "electronic nose" that he has developed. It has 12 electronic sensors, mimicking the thousands of sensors in the human nose, and can come up with an olfactory fingerprint of human pheromone samples presented to it. "For the first time," he says, "we will be able to match even extreme types of

human pheromone." Think of that next time you embark on choosing a perfume, or even an artwork, for a loved one.

Dr Dodd has already developed a synthetic human pheromone booster, the Pheromone Factor, produced by the Kiotech company, available by mail order (0990 120134) and advertised on the Quantum company's TV shopping channel. He says: "It can revitalise your pheromones and recreate the pheromone kick you had when you were 20."

"The output of pheromones starts with puberty, peaks in the late twenties, then diminishes. Reduced sexual activity and incompatibilities in sexual drive can create problems, especially nowadays, when expectations

of sexual performance are high. We are now in a position to compensate for that."

Bogus? Mutton soup? "The Pheromone Factor is not the complete answer," says Dodd, "but if people think they have a reasonable basis for a permanent relationship, we can give a bit of the tummy back."

On the shopping channel, he explains, creatures we are vision oriented. It's our eyes that attract us to a potential mate. The next stage of attention: we actually respond to the tone of their voice. If it sounds good, we move in closer. And then our sense of smell comes into play and our brain starts to investigate the pheromones of the person we're talking to. It's this third crucial stage that results in absolute success or failure, because if we can't detect their pheromones, we probably won't find them attractive."

Dr Dodd has discovered that the seven families of human pheromones correspond to the aroma of the foods traditionally considered aphrodisiacs: truffles, caviar, shellfish, champagne, beer, ripe cheese and vintage wine. And: "I speculate on the possibility that the body odour, and find attractive in a sex, body odour is that of our own – we always

He is attempting to find when 1 pheromones to all for this fight, lems related to ster than ever diet and smoking. ag partners arts he looks forwarder me, smelly operations. Repressing to supplied with sm have a chance savour Bizet's fic rked for me. Carmen, then mthing else I'd Liu of Puccini's d heavyweights lowed by a comb ger than Mike, them both. Is the ger down too, so word for disar down too, so are to fear?"

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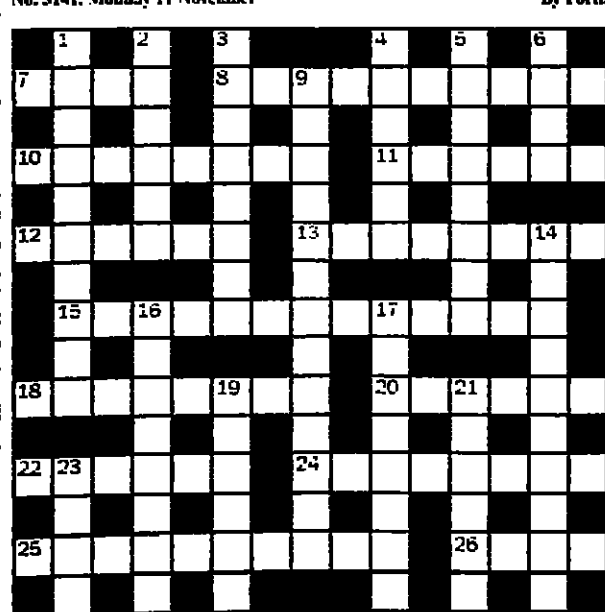
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Show it's the same either way (4)
 - Present sum is expensive no matter what (2,3,5)
 - Bloomer's made by Henry receiving rise (8)
 - Firm date? (6)
 - Girl in the hostel lashed out (6)
 - Become a block to progress (3,5)
 - Reconsider and be less disapproving (5,6,2)
 - Warn Greek guy about money before end of the month (8)
 - Clear wet fish (6)
 - Bird, three quarters done in stone (6)
 - Perfect construction in grammatical terms? (8)

- DOWN**
- Roman city said to be in ruins (10)
 - Attraction of a ring, say (6)
 - Withdraw support after work (4,4)
 - Meantime furnishes little room (6)
 - Well-balanced as a group (8)
 - Boss remained within hearing (4)
 - Disagreeing with deal Reg has got arranged (2,11)
 - A story involving female pupil causes trouble (10)
 - I point out narrow shaped implements (8)
 - Dutch explorer possesses element of charm (8)
 - Elected to serve and produce plan (6)
 - I deceive Greek character about setting (6)
 - Utter spell upside-down (4)

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